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A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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The Vailed Sorceress; OR, LA MASQUE, THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,

Author of "The Dark Secret," "The Twin Sisters," "An Awful Mystery," "Erminie; or, The Gipsy Queen's Vow," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE SORCERESS.

THE plague raged in the city of London. The destroying angel had gone forth, and kindled with its fiery breath the awful pestilence, until all London became one mighty lazaretto. Thousands were swept away daily; grass grew in the streets, and the living were scarce able to bury the dead. Business of all kinds was at an end, except that of the coffin-makers and drivers of the pest-carts. Whole streets were shut up, and almost every other house in the city bore the fatal red cross, and the ominous inscription: "Lord have mercy on us." Few people save the watchmen, armed with halberds, keeping guard over the stricken houses, appeared in the streets; and those who ventured there, shrunk from each other, and passed rapidly on with averted faces. Many even fell dead on the sidewalk, and lay with their ghastly, discolored faces upturned to the mocking sunlight, until the dead cart came rattling along, and the drivers hoisted the body with their pitchforks on the top of their dreadful load. Few other vehicles besides those same dead-carts appeared in the city now; and they plied their trade busily, day and night; and the cry of the drivers echoed dimly through the deserted streets: "Bring out your dead! bring out your dead!" All who could do so had long ago fled from the devoted city; and London lay under the burning heat of the June sunshine, stricken for its sins by the hand of God. The pest-houses were full, so were the plague-pits, where the dead were hurled in cartfuls; and no one knew who rose up in health in the morning but that they might be lying stark and dead in a few hours. The very churches were forsaken; their pastors fled or lying in the plague-pits; and it was even resolved to convert the great cathedral of St. Paul into a vast plague-hospital. Cries and lamentations echoed from one end of the city to the other, and Death and Charles reigned over London together.

Yet, in the midst of all this, many scenes of wild orgies and debauchery still went on within its gates—as, in our own day, when the cholera ravaged Paris, the inhabitants of that facetious city made it a carnival, so now, in London, there were many who, feeling they had but a few days to live at the most, resolved to defy death, and indulge in the revelry while they yet existed. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die!" was their motto; and if in the midst of the frantic dance or debauched revel one of them dropped dead, the others only shrieked with laughter, hurled the livid body out to the street, and the demoniac mirth grew twice as fast and furious as before. Robbers and cut-purses paraded the streets at noonday, entered boldly closed and deserted houses, and bore off, with impunity, whatever they pleased. Highwaymen infested Hounslow Heath, and all the roads leading from the city, levying a toll on all who passed, and plundering fearlessly the flying citizens. In fact, far-famed London town, in the year of grace 1865, would have given one a good idea of Pandemonium broke loose.

It was drawing to the close of an almost tropical June day, that the crowd who had thronged the precincts of St. Paul's since early morning, began to disperse. The sun, that had throbbled the live-long day like a great heart of fire in a sea of brass, was sinking from sight in clouds of crimson, purple and gold, yet Paul's walk was crowded. There were court-gallants in ruffles and plumes; ballad-singers chanting the not-over delicate ditties of the Earl of Rochester; usurers exchanging gold for bonds worth three times what they gave for them; quack-doctors reading in dolorous tones the bills of mortality of the preceding day, and selling plague-water and anti-pestilential abominations, whose merit they loudly extolled; ladies, too, richly dressed, and many of them masked; and booksellers who always made St. Paul's a favorite haunt, and even to this day patronize its precincts, and flourish in the regions of Paternoster Row and Ave Maria Lane; court pages in rich liveries, pert and flippant; serving-men out of place, and pickpockets with a keen eye to business; all clashed and jostled together, raising a din to which the Plain of Shinar, with its confusion of tongues and Babylonish workmen, were as nothing.

Moving serenely through this discordant sea of his fellow-creatures came a young man booted and spurred, whose rich doublet of cherry-colored velvet, edged and spangled with gold, and jaunty hat set slightly on one side of his head, with its long black plume and diamond clasp, proclaimed him to be somebody. A profusion of snowy shirt-frill rushed impudently out of his doublet; a black-velvet cloak, lined with amber-satin, fell picturesque from his shoulders; a sword with a jeweled hilt clanked on the pavement as he walked. One hand was



While Sir Norman gazed in astonishment and incredulity, the scene faded away and another took its place.

covered with a gauntlet of canary-colored kid, perfumed to a degree that would shame any belle of to-day; the other, which rested lightly on his sword-hilt, flashed with a splendid opal, splendidly set. He was a handsome fellow, too, with fair, waving hair (for he had the good taste to discard the ugly wigs then in vogue), dark, bright, handsome eyes, a thick blonde mustache, a tall and remarkably graceful figure, and an expression of countenance wherein easy good-nature and fiery impetuosity had a hard struggle for mastery. That he was a courtier of rank, was apparent from his rich attire and rather aristocratic bearing, and a crowd of hangers-on followed him as he went, loudly demanding spur-money. A group of timbrel girls, singing shrilly the songs of the day, called boldly to him as he passed; and one of them, more free and easy than the rest, danced up to him, striking her timbrel, and shouting rather than singing the chorus of the then popular ditty:

"What care I for pest or plague?
We can die but once, God wot;
Kiss me, darling—stay with me;
Love me—love me, leave me not!"

The darling in question turned his bright

blue eyes on that dashing street-singer with a cool glance of recognition.

"Very sorry, Nell," he said, in a nonchalant tone, "but I'm afraid I must. How long have you been here, may I ask?"

"A full hour by St. Paul's; and where has Sir Norman Kingsley been, may I ask? I thought you were dead of the plague."

"Not exactly. Have you seen—ah! there he is. The very man I want."

With which Sir Norman Kingsley dropped a gold piece into the girl's extended palm, and pushed on through the crowd up Paul's Walk.

A tall, dark figure was leaning moodily with folded arms, looking fixedly at the ground, and taking no notice of the busy scene around him, until Sir Norman laid his ungloved and jeweled hand lightly on his shoulder.

"Good-morning, Ormiston! I had an idea I would find you here, and—but what's the matter with you, man? Have you got the plague? or has your mysterious innamorata jilted you? or what other annoyance has happened to make you look as woebegone as old King Lear, sent adrift by his tender daughters to take care of himself?"

The individual addressed lifted his head, dis-closing a dark and rather handsome face, settled now into a look of gloomy discontent. He slightly raised his hat as he saw who his questioner was.

"Ah! it's you, Sir Norman! I had given up all notion of your coming, and was about to quit this confounded babel—this tumultuous den of thieves. What has detained you?"

"I was on duty at Whitehall. Are we not in time to keep our appointment?"

"Oh, certainly! La Masque is at home to visitors at all hours, day and night. I believe in my soul she doesn't know what sleep means."

"And you are still as much in love with her as ever, I dare swear! I have no doubt, now, it was of her you were thinking when I came up. Nothing else could ever have made you look so dismally woebegone as you did when Providence sent me to your relief."

"I was thinking of her," said the young man, moodily, and with a darkening brow. Sir Norman favored him with a half-amused, half-contemptuous stare for a moment; then stopped at a huckster's stall to purchase some

cigarettes; lit one, and, after smoking for a few minutes, pleasantly remarked, as if the fact had just struck him:

"Ormiston, you're a fool!"

"I know it," said Sir Norman, sententiously. "The idea," said Sir Norman, knocking the ashes daintily off the end of his cigar with the tip of his little finger—"the idea of falling in love with a woman whose face you have never seen! I can understand a man's going to any absurd extreme when he falls in love in proper Christian fashion, with a proper Christian face; but to go stark, staring mad, as you have done, my dear fellow, about a black loo mask, why—I consider that a little too much of a good thing! Come, let us go."

Nodding easily to his numerous acquaintances as he went, Sir Norman Kingsley sauntered leisurely down Paul's Walk, and out through the great door of the cathedral, followed by his melancholy friend. Pausing for a moment to gaze at the gorgeous sunset with a look of languid admiration, Sir Norman passed his arm through that of his friend, and they walked on at rather a rapid pace, in the direction of old London Bridge. There were few people abroad, except the watchmen walking slowly up and down before the plague-stricken houses; but in every street they passed through they noticed huge piles of wood and coal heaped down the center. Smoking zealously, they had walked on for a season in silence, when Ormiston ceased puffing for a moment, to inquire:

"What are all these for? This is a strange time, I should imagine, for bonfires."

"They're not bonfires," said Sir Norman; "at least, they are not intended for that; and if your head was not fuller of that masked Witch of Endor than common sense (for I believe she is nothing better than a witch), you could not have helped knowing. The Lord Mayor of London has been inspired, suddenly, with a notion, that if several thousand fires are kindled at once in the streets, it will purify the air, and check the pestilence; so when St. Paul's tolls the hour of midnight, all these piles are to be fired. It will be a glorious illumination, no doubt; but as to its stopping the progress of the plague, I am afraid that it is altogether too good to be true."

"Why should you doubt it? The plague cannot last forever."

"No. But Lilly, the astrologer, who predicted its coming, also foretold that it would last for many months yet; and since one prophecy has come true, I see no reason why the other should not."

"Except the simple one that there would be nobody left alive to take it. All London will be lying in the plague-pits by that time."

"A pleasant prospect; but a true one, I have no doubt. And, as I have no ambition to be hurled headlong into one of those horrible holes, I shall leave town altogether in a few days. And, Ormiston, I would strongly recommend you to follow my example."

"Not I!" said Ormiston, in a tone of gloomy resolution. "While La Masque stays, so will I."

"And perhaps die of the plague in a week."

"So be it! I don't fear the plague half as much as I do the thought of losing her!"

Again Sir Norman stared.

"Oh, I see! It's a hopeless case! Faith, I begin to feel curious to see this enchantress, who has managed so effectively to turn your brain. When did you see her last?"

"Yesterday," said Ormiston, with a deep sigh. "And if she were made of granite, she could not be harder to me than she is!"

"So she doesn't care about you, then?"

"Not she! She has a little Blenheim lap-dog, that she loves a thousand times more than she ever will me!"

"Then what an idiot you are, to keep haunting her like her shadow! Why don't you be a man, and tear out from your heart such a god-dess?"

"Ah! that's easily said; but if you were in my place, you'd act exactly as I do."

"I don't believe it. It's not in me to go mad about anything with a masked face and a marble heart. If I loved any woman—which, thank Fortune, at this present time I do not—and she had the bad taste not to return it, I should take my hat, make her a bow, and go directly and love somebody else made of flesh and blood, instead of cast-iron! You know the old song, Ormiston:

"If she be not fair for me
What care I how fair she be!"

"Kingsley, you know nothing about it!" said Ormiston, impatiently. "So stop talking nonsense. If you are cold-blooded, I am not; and—I love her!"

Sir Norman slightly shrugged his shoulders, and flung his smoked-out weed into a heap of firewood.

"Are we near her house?" he asked. "Yonder is the bridge."

"And yonder is the house," replied Ormiston, pointing to a large, ancient building—ancient even for those times—with three stories, each projecting over the other. "See! while the houses on either side are marked as pest-stricken, hers alone bears no cross. So it is: those who cling to life are stricken with death; and those who, like me, are desperate, even death shuns."

"Why, my dear Ormiston, you surely are not so far gone as that! Upon my honor, I had no idea you were in such a bad way."

"I am nothing but a miserable wretch! and I wish to Heaven I was in yonder dead-cart, with the rest of them—and she, too, if she never intends to love me!"

Ormiston spoke with such fierce earnestness, that there was no doubting his sincerity; and Sir Norman became profoundly shocked—so much so, that he did not speak again until they were almost at the door. Then he opened his lips to ask, in a subdued tone:

"She has predicted the future for you—what did she foretell?"

"Nothing good; no fear of there being anything in store for such an unlucky dog as I am."

"Where did she learn this wonderful black art of hers?"

"In the East, I believe. She has been there, and all over the world; and now visits England for the first time."

"She has chosen a sprightly season for her visit. Is she not afraid of the plague, I wonder?"

"No; she fears nothing," said Ormiston, as he knocked loudly at the door. "I begin to believe she is made of adamant instead of what other women are made of."

"Which is a rib, I believe," observed Sir Norman, thoughtfully. "And that accounts, I dare say, for their being of such a crooked and cantankerous nature. They're a wonderful race, women are; and for what inscrutable reason it has pleased Providence to create them—"

The opening of the door brought to a sudden end this little touch of moralizing, and a wrinkled old porter thrust out a very withered and unlovely face.

"Is La Masque at home?" inquired Ormiston, stepping in, without ceremony.

The old man nodded, and pointed up-stairs; and with a "This way, Kingsley," Ormiston sprang lightly up, three at a time, followed in the same style by Sir Norman.

"You seem pretty well acquainted with the latitude and longitude of this place," observed that young gentleman, as they passed into a room at the head of the stairs.

"I ought to be; I've been here often enough," said Ormiston. "This is the common waiting-room for all who wish to consult La Masque. That old bag of bones who let us in has gone to announce us."

Sir Norman took a seat, and glanced curiously round the room. It was a commonplace apartment enough, with a floor of polished black oak, slippery as ice, and shining like glass; a few old Flemish paintings on the walls; a large, round table in the center of the floor, on which lay a pair of the old musical instruments called "virginals." Two large, curtainless windows, with minute diamond-shaped panes, set in leaden casements, admitted the golden and crimson light.

"For the reception-room of a sorceress," remarked Sir Norman, with an air of disappointed criticism, "there is nothing very wonderful about all this. How is it she spies fortunes, anyway? As Lilly does by maps and charts, or as these old Eastern mufti do it by magic mirrors and all such fooleries?"

"Neither," said Ormiston; "her style is more like that of the Indian alchemists, who show you your destiny in a well. She has a sort of magic lake in her room, and—but you will see it all for yourself presently."

"I have always heard," said Sir Norman, in the same meditative way, "that truth lies at the bottom of a well, and I am glad some one has turned up at last who is able to find it out. Ah! Here comes our ancient Mercury to show us to the presence of your goddess."

The door opened, and the "old bag of bones," as Ormiston irreverently styled his lady-love's ancient domestic, made a sign for them to follow him. Leading the way down a long corridor, he flung open a pair of shining folding-doors at the end, and ushered them at once into the majestic presence of the sorceress and her magic room. Both gentlemen doffed their plumed hats. Ormiston stepped forward at once; but Sir Norman discreetly paused in the doorway to contemplate the scene of action. As he slowly did so, a look of deep displeasure settled on his features, on finding it not half so awful as he had supposed.

In some ways it was very like the room they had left, being low, large and square, and having floors, walls and ceiling paneled with glossy black oak. But it had no windows—a large bronze lamp, suspended from the center of the ceiling, shed a flickering, ghastly light. There were no paintings—some grim carvings of skulls, skeletons, and serpents, pleasantly wreathed the room—neither were there seats nor tables—nothing but a huge ebony caldron at the upper end of the apartment, over which a grinning skeleton on wires, with a scythe in one hand of bone, and an hour-glass in the other, kept watch and ward. Opposite this cheerful-looking guardian was a tall figure in black, standing as motionless as if it, too, was carved in ebony. It was a female figure, very tall and slight, but as beautifully symmetrical as a Venus Celestis. Her dress was of black velvet, that swept the polished floor, spangled all over with stars of gold and rich rubies. A profusion of shining black hair fell in waves and curls almost to her feet; but her face, from forehead to chin, was completely hidden by a black velvet mask. In one hand, exquisitely small and white, she held a gold casket, blazing (like her dress) with rubies, and with the other she toyed with a tame viper, that had twined itself round her wrist. This was doubtless La Masque, and becoming conscious of that fact, Sir Norman made her a low and courtly bow. She returned it by a slight bend of the head, and turning toward his companion, spoke:

"You here again, Mr. Ormiston! To what am I indebted for the honor of two visits in two days?"

Her voice, Sir Norman thought, was the sweetest he had ever heard, musical as a chime of silver bells, soft as the tones of an æolian harp through which the west wind plays.

"Madam, I am aware my visits are undesired," said Ormiston, with a flushing cheek and slightly tremulous voice; "but I have merely come with my friend, Sir Norman Kingsley, who wishes to know what the future has in store for him."

Thus invoked, Sir Norman Kingsley stepped forward, with another low bow, to the masked lady.

"Yes, madam, I have long heard that those fair fingers can withdraw the curtain of the future, and I have come to see what Dame Destiny is going to do for me."

"Sir Norman Kingsley is welcome," said the sweet voice, "and shall see what he desires. There is but one condition, that he will keep

perfectly silent; for if he speaks, the scene he beholds will vanish. Come forward!"

Sir Norman compressed his lips as closely as if they were forever hermetically sealed, and came forward accordingly. Leaning over the edge of the ebony caldron, he found that it contained nothing more dreadful than water, for he labored under a vague and unpleasant idea that, like the witches' caldron in Macbeth, it might be filled with serpents' blood and children's brains. La Masque opened her golden casket, and took from it a portion of red powder, with which it was filled. Casting it into the caldron, she murmured an invocation in Sanscrit, or Coptic, or some other unknown tongue, and slowly there arose a dense cloud of dark-red smoke, that nearly filled the room.

Had Sir Norman ever read the story of Aladdin, he would probably have thought of it then; but the young courtier did not greatly affect literature of any kind, and thought of nothing now but of seeing something when the smoke cleared away. It was rather long in doing so, and when it did, he saw nothing at last but his own handsome, half-serious, half-incredulous face; but gradually a picture, distinct and clear, formed itself at the bottom, and Sir Norman gazed with bewildered eyes. He saw a large room filled with a sparkling crowd, many of them ladies, splendidly arrayed and flashing in jewels, and foremost among them stood one whose beauty surpassed anything he had ever before dreamed of. She wore the robes of a queen, purple and ermine—diamonds blazed on the beautiful neck, arms and fingers, and a tiara of the same brilliants crowned her regal head.

In one hand she held a scepter; what seemed to be a throne was behind her, but something that surprised Sir Norman most of all was, to find himself standing beside her, the cynosure of all eyes. While he yet gazed in mingled astonishment and incredulity, the scene faded away, and another took its place. This time a dungeon-cell, damp and dismal; walls, and floor, and ceiling covered with green and hideous slime. A small lamp stood on the floor, and by its sickly, watery gleam, he saw himself again standing, pale and dejected, near the wall. But he was not alone; the same glittering vision in purple and diamonds stood before him, and suddenly he drew his sword and plunged it up to the hilt in her heart! The beautiful vision fell like a stone at his feet, and the sword was drawn out reeking with her life-blood. This was a little too much for the real Sir Norman, and with an expression of indignant consternation, he sprang upright. Instantly it all faded away, and the reflection of his own excited face looked up at him from the caldron.

"I told you not to speak," said La Masque, quietly; "but you must look on still another scene."

Again she threw a portion of the contents of the casket into the caldron, and "spoke aloud the words of power." Another cloud of smoke arose and filled the room, and when it cleared away, Sir Norman beheld a third and less startling sight. The scene and place he could not discover, but it seemed to him like night and a storm. Two men were lying on the ground, and bound fast together, it appeared to him. As he looked it faded away, and once more his own face seemed to mock him in the clear water.

"Do you know those two last figures?" asked the lady.

"I do," said Sir Norman, promptly; "it was Ormiston and myself."

"Right! and one of them was dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Sir Norman, with a perceptible start. "Which one, madam?"

"If you cannot tell that, neither can I. If there is anything further you wish to see, I am quite willing to show it to you."

"I'm obliged to you," said Sir Norman, stepping back; "but no more at present, thank you. Do you mean to say, madam, that I'm some day to murder a lady, especially one so beautiful as she I just now saw?"

"I have said nothing—all you've seen will come to pass, and whether your destiny be for good or evil, I have nothing to do with it, except," said the sweet voice, earnestly, "that if La Masque could show Sir Norman Kingsley's pathway with roses, she would most assuredly do so."

"Madam, you are too kind," said that young gentleman, laying his hand on his heart, while Ormiston scowled darkly—"more especially as I've the misfortune to be a perfect stranger to you."

"Not so, Sir Norman. I have known you this many a day; and before long we shall be better acquainted. Permit me to wish you good-evening."

At this gentle hint, both gentlemen bowed themselves out, and soon found themselves in the street, with very different expressions of countenance—Sir Norman looking considerably pleased and decidedly puzzled, and Mr. Ormiston looking savagely and uncompromisingly jealous. The animated skeleton who had admitted them closed the door after them; and the two friends stood in the twilight on London Bridge.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEAD BRIDE.

"WELL," said Ormiston, drawing a long breath, "what do you think of that?"

"Think! Don't ask me yet," said Sir Norman, looking rather bewildered. "I'm in such a state of mystification that I don't rightly know whether I'm standing on my head or feet. For one thing, I have come to the conclusion that your masked lady-love must be enchantingly beautiful."

"Have I not told you that a thousand times, oh, thou of little faith! But why have you come to such a conclusion?"

"Because no woman with such a figure, such a voice, and such hands could be otherwise."

"I knew you would own it some day. Do you wonder now that I love her?"

"Oh! as to loving her," said Sir Norman, coolly, "that's quite another thing. I could no more love her for her hands, voice and shape, than I could a figure in wood or wax; but I admire her vastly, and think her extremely clever. I will never forget that face in the caldron. It was the most exquisitely beautiful I ever saw."

"In love with the shadow of a face! Why, you are a thousandfold more absurd than I," said Sir Norman, thoughtfully, "I don't know as I'm in love with it; but if ever I see a living face like it, I certainly shall be."

"You had better ask her," said Ormiston, bitterly. "She seems to have taken an unusual interest in you at first sight. She would strew your path with roses, forsooth! Nothing earthly, I believe, would make her say anything half so tender to me."

Sir Norman laughed, and stroked his mustache complacently.

"All a matter of taste, my dear fellow; and these women are noted for their perfection in that line. I begin to admire La Masque more and more, and I think you had better give up the chase, and let me take your place. I don't believe you have the ghost of a chance, Ormiston."

"I don't believe it myself," said Ormiston, with a desperate face; "but until the plague carries me off, I cannot give her up; and the sooner that happens the better. Ha! what is this?"

It was a piercing shriek—no unusual sound; and, as he spoke, the door of an adjoining house was flung open, a woman rushed wildly out, fled down an adjoining street, and disappeared.

Sir Norman and his companion looked at each other, and then at the house.

"What's all this about?" demanded Ormiston.

"That's a question I can't take it upon myself to answer," said Sir Norman; "and the only way to solve the mystery is, to go in and see."

"It may be the plague," said Ormiston, hesitating. "Yet the house is not marked. There is a watchman. I will ask him."

The man with the halberd in his hand was walking up and down before an adjoining house, bearing the ominous red cross and piteous inscription: "Lord have mercy on us!"

"I don't know, sir," was his answer to Ormiston. "If any one there has the plague, they must have taken it lately; for I heard this morning there was to be a wedding there to-night."

"I never heard of any one screaming in that fashion about a wedding," said Ormiston, doubtfully. "Do you know who lives there?"

"No, sir. I only came here, myself, yesterday, but two or three times to-day I have seen a very beautiful young lady looking out of the window."

Ormiston thanked the man, and went back to report to his friend.

"A beautiful young lady!" said Sir Norman, with energy. "Then I mean to go directly up and see about it, and you can follow or not, just as you please."

So saying, Sir Norman entered the open doorway, and found himself in a long hall, flanked by a couple of doors on each side. These he opened in rapid succession, finding nothing but silence and solitude; and Ormiston—who, upon reflection, chose to follow—ran up a wide and sweeping staircase at the end of the hall. Sir Norman followed him, and they came to a hall similar to the one below. A door to the right lay open; and both entered without ceremony, and looked around.

The room was spacious, and richly furnished. Just enough light stole through the oriel window at the further end, draped with crimson satin, to enable them to see the floor. The floor was of veined wood of many colors, arranged in fanciful mosaics, and strewn with Turkish rugs and Persian mats of gorgeous colors. The walls were carved, the ceiling corbelled, and all fretted with gold network and gilded moldings. On a couch covered with crimson satin, like the window drapery, lay a cithren and some loose sheets of music. Near it was a small marble table, covered with books and drawings, with a decanter of wine and an exquisite little goblet of Bohemian glass. The marble mantel was strewn with ornaments of porcelain and alabaster, and a beautifully carved vase of Parian marble stood in the center, filled with brilliant flowers. A great mirror reflected back the room, and beneath it stood a toilet-table, strewn with jewels, laces, perfume-bottles, and an array of costly little feminine trifles such as ladies were so fond of.

Two centuries ago as they are to-day, evidently it was a lady's chamber; for in a recess near the window stood a great quaint-carved bedstead, with curtains and snowy lace, looped back with golden arrows and scarlet ribbons. Some one lay on it, too—at least, Ormiston thought so; and he went cautiously forward, drew the curtain, and looked down.

"Great Heaven! what a beautiful face!" was his cry, as he bent still further down.

"What the plague is the matter?" asked Sir Norman, coming forward.

"You have said it," said Ormiston, recoiling. "The plague is the matter. There lies one dead of it!"

Curiosity proving stronger than fear, Sir Norman stepped forward to look at the corpse.

It was a young girl with a face as lovely as a poet's vision, and that face was like snow, now; and, in its calm, cold majesty, looked as ex-quisitely perfect as some ancient Grecian statue. The low, pearly brow, the sweet, beautiful lips, the delicate oval outline of countenance, were perfect. The eyes were closed, and the long dark lashes rested on the ivory cheeks. A profusion of shining dark hair fell in elaborate curls over her neck and shoulders. Her dress was that of a bride; a robe of white satin brocaded with silver, fairly dazzling in its shining radiance, and as brief in the article of sleeves and neck as that of any modern belle. A circlet of pearls were clasped round the snowy throat, and bracelets of the same jewels encircled the snowy taper arms. On her head she wore a bridal wreath and veil—the former of jewels, the latter falling round her like a cloud of mist. Everything was perfect, from her white and red to the tiny sandaled feet; and lying there in her repose she looked more like some exquisite piece of sculpture than anything that had ever lived and moved in this groveling world of ours. But from one shoulder the dress had been pulled down, and there lay a great livid, purple plague-spot!

"Come away!" said Ormiston, catching his companion by the arm. "It is death to remain here!"

Sir Norman had been standing like one in a trance, from which this address roused him, and he grasped Ormiston's shoulder almost frantically.

"Look there, Ormiston! There lies the very face that sorceress showed me, fifteen minutes ago, in her infernal caldron! I would know it at the other end of the world!"

"Are you sure?" said Ormiston, glancing again with new curiosity at the marble face. "I never saw anything half so beautiful in all my life, but you see she is dead of the plague."

"Dead? Oh, she cannot be! Nothing so perfect could die!"

"Look there," said Ormiston, pointing to the plague-spot. "There is the fatal token! For Heaven's sake let us go out of this, or we will share the same fate before morning!"

But Sir Norman did not move—could not move; he stood there rooted to the spot by the spell of that lovely, lifeless face.

Usually the plague left its victims hideous, ghastly, discolored, and covered with blotches; but in this case there was nothing to mar the perfect beauty of the satin-smooth skin, but that one dreadful mark.

There Sir Norman stood in his trance, as motionless as if some giant out of the "Arabian Nights" had suddenly turned him into stone (a trick they were much addicted to), and destined him to remain there an ornamental fixture for ever.

Ormiston looked at him distractedly, uncertain whether to try moral suasion or to take him by the collar and drag him headlong down the stairs, when a providential bell rather distant circumstance came to his relief. A cart came rattling along the street, a bell was loudly rung, and a hoarse voice arose with it:

"Bring out your dead! bring out your dead!"

Ormiston rushed down stairs to intercept the dead-cart, already almost full, on its way to the plague-pit. The driver stopped at his call, and instantly followed him up stairs, and into the room. Glancing at the body with the utmost *sans froid*, he touched the dress, and indifferently remarked:

"A bride, I should say, and an uncommonly handsome one, too. We'll just take her along as she is, and strip these nice things off the body when we get it to the plague-pit."

So saying, he wrapped her in the sheet, and directing Ormiston to take hold of the two lower ends, took the upper corners himself, with the aid of a man quite used to that sort of thing.

Ormiston recoiled from touching it, and Sir Norman, seeing what they were about to do, and knowing there was no help for it, made up his mind, like a sensible young man as he was, to conceal his feelings, and caught hold of the sheet himself. In this fashion the dead bride was carried down stairs, and laid upon a shutter on the top of a pile of bodies in the dead-cart.

It was now almost dark, and as the cart started, the great clock of St. Paul's struck eight. St. Michael's, St. Alban's, and others took up the sound; and the two young men paused to listen. For many weeks the sky had been clear, brilliant, and blue; but on this night dark clouds were scudding in wild unrest across it, and the air was oppressively close and sultry.

"Where are you going now?" said Ormiston. "Are you for Whitehall's to-night?"

"No," said Sir Norman, rather dejectedly, turning to follow the pest-cart. "I am for the plague-pit in Finsbury fields!"

"Nonsense, man!" exclaimed Ormiston, energetically, "what will take you there? You surely are not mad enough to follow the body of that dead girl?"

"I shall follow it. You can come or not, just as you please."

"Oh! if you are determined, I will go with you, of course; but it is the craziest freak I ever heard of. After this, you need never laugh at me."

"I never will," said Sir Norman, moodily; "for if you love a face you have never seen, I love one I have only looked on when dead. Does it not seem sacrilege to throw any one so like an angel into that horrible plague-pit?"

"I never saw an angel," said Ormiston, as he and his friend started to go after the dead-cart. "And I dare say there have been scores as beautiful as that poor girl thrown into the plague-pit before now. I wonder why the house has been deserted, and if she was really a bride. The bridegroom could not have loved her much, I fancy, or not even the pestilence could have scared him away."

"But, Ormiston, what an extraordinary thing it is, that that should be precisely the same face that the fortune-teller showed me! There she was alive, and here she is dead; so I've lost all faith in La Masque forever."

Ormiston looked doubtful.

"Are you quite sure it is the same, Kingsley?"

"Quite sure!" said Sir Norman, indignantly. "Of course I am! Do you think I could be mistaken in such a case? I tell you I would know the face in Kamshatka or the North Pole; for I don't believe there ever was such another created."

"So be it, then! Your object, of course, in following that cart is to take a look at her?"

"Precisely so. Don't talk; I feel in no mood for it just at present."

Ormiston smiled to himself, and did not talk, accordingly; and in silence the two friends followed the gloomy dead-cart. A faint young moon, pale and sickly, was struggling dimly through drifts of dark clouds, and lighted the lonesome, dreary streets with a wan, watery glimmer. For weeks the weather had been brilliantly fine—the days all sunshine, the nights all moonlight; but now Ormiston, looking up at the troubled face of the sky, concluded mentally that the Lord Mayor had selected an unpromising night for the grand illumination.

Sir Norman, with his eyes on the pest-cart and the long white figure therein, took no heed of anything in the heaven above or earth beneath, and strode along in dismal silence till they reached, at last, their journey's end.

As the cart stopped, two young men approached the edge of the plague-pit, and looked in with a shudder. Truly it was a horrible sight, that heaving, putrid sea of corruption; for the bodies of the miserable victims were thrown in cartfuls, and only covered with a handful of earth and quicklime. Here and there, through the cracking and sinking surface, could be seen protruding a fair white arm, or a baby face, mingled with the long, dark tresses of maidens, the golden curls of children, and the white hairs of old age. The pestilential effluvia arising from the dreadful mass was so overpowering that both shrunk back, faint and sick, after a moment's survey. It was indeed, as Sir Norman had said, a horrible grave wherein to lie.

Meantime the driver, with an eye to business, and no time for such nonsense as melancholy moralizing, had laid the body of the young girl on the great, and briskly turned his cart and dumped the remainder of his load into the pit. Then, having flung a few handfuls of clay over it, he unwound the sheet, and kneeling beside the body, prepared to remove the jewels.

The rays of the moon and his dark-lantern fell on the lovely, snow-white face together, and Sir Norman groaned despairingly as he saw its death-cold rigidity. The man had stripped the rings off the fingers, the bracelets off the arms; but as he was about to perform the same operation toward the necklace, he was stopped by a startling interruption enough. In his haste, the clasp entered the beautiful neck, inflicting a deep scratch from which the blood spouted; and at the same instant the dead girl opened her eyes, with a shrill cry. Uttering a yell of terror, as well he might, the man sprang back and gazed at her with horror, believing that his sacrilegious robbery had brought the dead to life.

Even the two young men—albeit neither of them given to nervousness or cowardice—recoiled for an instant and stared aghast. Then, as the whole truth struck them, that the girl had been in a deep swoon and not dead, both simultaneously darted forward, and, forgetting all fear of infection, knelt by her side. A pair of great, lustrous black eyes were staring wildly around, and fixed themselves first on one face and then on the other.

"Where am I?" she exclaimed, with a terrified look, as she strove to raise herself on her elbow, and fell instantaneously back with a cry of agony, as she felt for the first time the throbbing anguish of the wound.

"You are with friends, dear lady!" said Sir Norman, in a voice quite tremulous between astonishment and delight. "Fear nothing, for you shall be saved."

The great black eyes turned wildly upon him, while a fierce spasm convulsed the beautiful face.

"Oh, my God, I remember! I have the plague!" And, with a prolonged shriek of anguish, that thrilled even to the hardened heart of the dead-cart driver, the girl fell back senseless again.

Sir Norman Kingsley spring to his feet, and with more the air of a frantic lunatic than a responsible young English knight, caught the cold form in his arms, laid it in the dead-cart, and was about springing into the driver's seat, when that individual indignantly interposed.

"Come, now; none of that! If you were the king himself, you shouldn't run away with my cart in that fashion; so you just get out of my place as fast as you can!"

"My dear Kingsley, what are you about to do?" asked Ormiston, catching his excited friend by the arm.

"Do!" exclaimed Sir Norman, in a high key. "Can't you see that for yourself? And I'm going to have that girl cured of the plague, if there is such a thing as a doctor to be had for love or money, in London."

"You had better have her taken to the pest-house at once, then; there are chiropractors and nurses enough there."

"To the pest-house! Why, man, I might as well have her thrown into the plague-pit there, at once! Not I! I shall have her taken to my own house, and there properly cared for, and this good fellow will drive her there instantly."

Sir Norman backed this insinuation by putting a broad gold-piece into the driver's hand, which instantly produced a magical effect on his rather surly countenance.

"Certainly, sir," he began, springing into his seat with alacrity. "Where shall I drive the young lady to?"

"Follow me," said Sir Norman. "Come along, Ormiston." And seizing his friend by the arm, he hurried him along with a velocity rather uncomfortable, considering they both wore cloaks, and the night was excessively sultry. The gloomy vehicle and its fainting burden followed close behind.

"What do you mean to do with her?" asked Ormiston, as soon as he found breath enough to speak.

"Haven't I told you?" said Sir Norman, impatiently. "Take her home, of course."

"And after that?"

"Go for a doctor."

"And after that?"

"Take care of her till she gets well."

"And after that?"

"Why, find out her history and all about her."

"And after that?"

"After that! After that! How do I know what after that?" exclaimed Sir Norman, rather fiercely. "Ormiston, what do you mean?" Ormiston laughed.

"And after that you'll marry her, I suppose?"

"Perhaps I may, if she will have me. And what if I do?"

"Oh, nothing! Only it struck me you may be saving another man's wife."

"That's true!" said Sir Norman, in a subdued tone, "and if such should unhappily be the case, nothing will remain but to live in hopes that he may be carried off by the plague."

"Pray Heaven that we may not be carried off by it ourselves!" said Ormiston, with a slight shudder. "I shall dream of nothing but that horrible plague-pit for a week. If it were not for La Masque, I would not stay another hour in this pest-stricken city."

"Here we are," was Sir Norman's rather inapposite answer, as they entered Piccadilly, and stopped before a large and handsome house, whose gloomy portal was faintly illuminated by a large lamp. "Here, my man, just carry the lady in."

He unlocked the door as he spoke, and led the way across a long hall to a sleeping-chamber, elegantly fitted up. The man placed the body on the bed and departed, while Sir Norman, seizing a hand-bell, rung a peal that brought a staid-looking housekeeper to the scene directly. Seeing a lady, young and beautiful, in bridal robes, lying apparently dead on her young master's bed at that hour of the night, the discreet matron, over whose virtuous head fifty years and a snow-white cap had passed, started back with a slight scream.

"Gracious me, Sir Norman! What on earth is the meaning of this?"

No, though there was not the slightest trace of robbers or intruders, neither was there the slightest trace of the beautiful plague-patient. Everything in the house was precisely as it always was, but the silver shining vision was gone.

(To be continued.)

THE PLAY OF HEARTS.

BY JOHN GOSPIE.

Unto an actress' feet,
A nosegay red and sweet,
Was thrown;
And while her young heart beat
As it would faint repeat
Her thanks—
She heard a moan!
Then, as her gift she prest
To an enraptured breast—
She heard a cry—
And as she vanished quite
From out the people's sight—
She saw one die!

The Cross of Carlyon:

OR,
THE LADY OF LOCHWOOD.

A Romance of Baltimore.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK CRESCENT," "FLAMING TALISMAN," "RED SCORPION," "SILVER SERPENT," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CARD UNDER THE TABLE.

Wednesday evening came, and with it the reception extended by Christabel to the numerous friends of Arly & Arly.

It was a very brilliant but quiet affair; intellectual feasts do not consist of blind-man's buff or romps of abandon. The house was ablaze; choice music was discoursed from rooms below the illuminated parlor, imparting to the sound the semblance of a delightful serenade that pleased the ear unceasingly.

They were all assembled, when Christabel, dazzling in raiment and in her own beauteous form, entered on the arm of her father. Preston Arly danced around the pair with much agility.

Foremost of those presented to Christabel, was Gerard Vance, the detective. He was only allowed a moment for a pleasant interchange of greeting, when others supplanted him. His introduction headed the list purposely. The judicious Arlys did not wish to give him opportunity for too close an acquaintance.

He made way and retired to the opposite side of the room, watching her so intently that she seemed to have fallen under a spell of enchantment.

"It is Christabel, indeed," he muttered, half-aloud; "and how like her mother!—with that cold, beautiful face and passionless voice."

And Christabel:
"Where have I met that man before? The more I see of him, the more familiar his face seems; even his manner is reminding me of something, I know not what."

It was the thought of a moment, to fade as it had begun, in perplexity.

The crowd waved between, and Gerard Vance turned to converse, commonplace, with some one near.

The last person introduced to Christabel was a gentleman whom Preston Arly brought forward with much ceremony. Simultaneously, Albert withdrew his arm and retired.

"My dear, this is Mr. Wilford Wynne—a very intimate friend of your father's. Miss Carlyon, Mr. Wynne."

He was a man well calculated to turn the hearts of women less sensible than Christabel; faultless in figure and face, with piercing eyes, heavy, pliant mustache, and a voice insinuating to oiliness. His suit was full dress, and the diamond studs in his shirt-bosom fairly scintillated back the light from the glowing chandelier.

"Permit me to offer you a seat, Miss Carlyon." He took the tips of her fingers in his own, and drew her to a sofa.

"Of all the happy events of my life, in all my travels," said he, smiling, till his white, perfect teeth glistened under the mustache, "I must confess this honors me the rarest."

"You are a traveler, then, Mr. Wynne?"

"One of those uneasy mortals who never find rest in a single spot. Not for want of a clear conscience, though, I assure you."

"Have you been long in Baltimore?—long enough to see the small wonders?"

"Scarcely—about a week here."

"And among whatever you have seen, what has pleased you most?"

"To find that Preston Arly's fairest description of his niece was but poor eulogy of her true beauty."

"Indeed?" coolly. "Did you learn the art of flattery during your travels abroad? And do Americans not seem proper to it? If so, I have a poor opinion of our sex generally."

"A lady who is really beautiful, and is sensible of it, does not take offense when others praise her for that which she beholds in her mirror." Wynne hastened to say, perceiving that he had not created a favorable impression.

"Oh, I never thought of offense," said Christabel, with her low, musical laugh; "our acquaintance is too young yet for that. But I have no liking for such compliments; so you will spare me the task of reminder in the future."

"To find that Preston Arly's fairest description of his niece was but poor eulogy of her true beauty."

It required but a few moments of conversation to convince Wilford Wynne that Christabel Carlyon was not likely to figure among his conquests.

The lips of intellect were busy round the room. Some were at the grand piano, enraptured with a musical performance there.

As it would not seem proper to monopolize Christabel, Wynne excused himself as she began conversation with other admirers.

His retreat was one of utter defeat. He hastened to the side of Albert Arly.

"Well?" interrogated the latter. "What impression have you made, and what do you think of the beauty we offered as a prize?"

"I've made no impression at all, and I think the plan is a hopeless failure."

"What do you mean?"

"This," said Wynne, biting his lip in vexation, "she is impervious—a fortress that can't be taken. For the first time in my life I have met a woman absolutely dead to passion. You might as well try to ignite a block of ice. I tell you, there's no more 'marry 'em in my chances, than there would be success in a balloon trip to the moon."

"Pah! Furies, man! that is merely a first repulse."

"Pardon me, my dear friend, but you'll permit me to claim a superior knowledge of human nature. Christabel Carlyon cannot be wooed nor won, and she will be a dangerous enemy if she discovers your game. Such is the character I have read in her to-night."

Albert Arly clenched his fist.

At that juncture Arly, Sen., went bobbing past them, and he paused for an instant, to hiss into his son's ear:

"Ho! by the gods! your 'lady-killer' is a failure!" and was gone to mingle with those gathered at the piano.

"Have you anything practicable to suggest?" asked Wilford Wynne. "If not, I see that I might as well resign. The task, as it stands, is an impossible one."

"Not if you are a bold man," said Arly, scowling.

"Bold as they make 'em," was the reply.

"Then step this way. I have another plan. She must wed you," and, beckoning, he turned into the adjoining room.

Wynne delayed a moment to cast a glance toward Christabel.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed, under his breath, "the woman is a perfect angel in the face, and carries a dead heart in her breast. I would risk my life to possess her and teach her to be otherwise."

Gerard Vance had observed the consultation aside. A brain less keen than his could have known that they talked of Christabel—their looks toward her, their gestures, all were plain to the casual spy.

When the two schemers disappeared, Vance approached Christabel and joined the others who fluttered and buzzed around her.

Arly and Wynne were absent when refreshments were announced, and Vance secured the honor of escorting Christabel. He seemed determined in this particular, and his own persistent diplomacy was successful.

The two preceded the rest to the grand, glittering table below. They sat side by side, she at the head, he on the left corner, and as the champagne corks popped, and repartee and laughter sounded round the blazoned board, Gerard Vance devoted himself exclusively to his companion.

Preston Arly's raitlike eyes had the two under suspicious surveillance. He was dissatisfied. It was not according to his plan that any other than Wilford Wynne should play the gallant for Christabel—especially this detective, whom he now began to dread, and who, he wished, had not been invited after all. Though seemingly engrossed otherwise, he was striving to hear their dialogue. Had his small ears been adequate to the distance he might have heard this:

"Christabel Carlyon, do you know in whose hands you have placed yourself, by coming to this house?"

"My uncle, Preston, and my father, Albert Arly."

"The last the most bitter enemy you have in the world."

"Sir!" exclaimed Christabel, in a low voice, surprised at his familiarity and strange words, while her flashing eyes looked to his soul's core.

"You call Preston Arly your uncle?"

"Certainly."

"How can that be, when he is the father of your father?"

"You quite stupefy me, Mr. Vance. What can you be talking about?"

"Your interests are mine. That is why I speak thus."

"Please be more explicit."

"Look at this card, which I pass to you beneath the cloth. Do not betray what is transpiring. And if what you see surprises you, conceal the fact, especially from Preston Arly, who, I notice, is watching us jealously."

Christabel was mystified. Involuntarily she dropped her hand—a card was thrust into it in so sly a manner that no one but herself could see.

Looking carelessly downward to her lap, she read a name on the card.

The name was *Jerome Harrison*.

A little start of surprise, that was all. As she raised her eyes again the card was snatched away.

"Be careful," said he, "for that name must never be uttered in this house."

Though outwardly undisturbed, many natural emotions glowed in Christabel's bosom. Had her eyes deceived her? Had she found, at last, why he seemed so familiar to her from the first moment she saw him at the Washington Monument? Was it Jerome Harrison, for whom she had searched in vain, now discovered to her under such unexpected circumstances, and in the character of an unaccountable masquerade?

Her mind flew back to childhood. The sunny hours at Lochwood, amid its bright flowers and romantic airs; the rambles in the dim old forest, or by the babbling brook that had, mayhap, long since ceased its sounds of plashing over the pebbles she once gathered in girlish glee; the straight-figured, handsome young man, who had been a cherished friend to her and the champion of her mother; the games and merriment, rides and romps, all half-forgotten because of the intervening shadows of years, now all roused in a moment of conjury.

And if there remained a doubt of the fact that Jerome Harrison now sat beside her, it was dispelled by one glance at the large topaz ring on his finger, which she remembered her mother to have worn in those halcyon days.

"This is a disguise?" she said, low and inquiring.

"Yes; and was assumed for your sake. Do you think you remember me, Christabel?"

Even his voice thrilled her with its sameness to that of old.

"I cannot so easily forget happy things."

"Then you must know that as I loved your mother to idolatry, so do I love you. I am trembling for you. What brought you to this house?"

"Quite by accident," replied Christabel, picking daintily at her cake. "I met my uncle Preston on the street."

"Your uncle? Why, Preston Arly is the father of your father—your grandfather!" he exclaimed.

Christabel, with all her self-control, stared at him in surprise.

"He is not your uncle, Christabel; and I see, already, that you are in some sort of a trap. Albert Arly, your father, is my enemy, and I fear he is also yours."

"If he is your enemy, how does it happen that you are so intimate here?"

"Because I am Gerard Vance, the detective; they do not know my real identity. If they were aware Jerome Harrison mingled here, my life would be in jeopardy. Albert Arly has good cause to hate and fear Jerome Harrison, and I have an account to settle with him. When you hear what I can tell you, you will know what I mean when I warn you that you are now in the coils of reptiles."

"But they are working to establish me in my inheritance," she whispered, bewilderedly.

"For some wily purpose of their own, you may be sure. I am the executor of your mother's estate. I am the one to aid you—a duty which, at your mother's death-bed, I vowed to perform. Ah! Preston Arly has been watching us. He comes this way. I have no time for further explanation. If you will ride out alone to-morrow, I will watch for you at the Battle Monument. You will then know all—"

know that the father to whom you have turned, is a red-handed murderer, whose crime and baseness destroyed your mother's life. Remember, my name is Gerard Vance. Do you trust me?"

"I trust you with my whole soul!" answered Christabel, almost involuntarily; for while she recalled her early life, and while her ears were startled by the terrible significance of his closing speech—she recognized fully the dear companion and preceptor of those bygone days, all the impulses of the olden time sprung to life within her; and if there existed a vein of passion in her heart it warmed, unbidden, toward him.

Jerome Harrison had been her godly ideal then; nature and remembrance drew her being to him now.

Further dialogue was interrupted by the intrusion of old Arly, who kept disagreeably near them during the next half-hour. As Gerard Vance had anticipated, there was no more opportunity for private converse while at, or after table. He consoled himself, however, with expectation of meeting her next day, and now that he had discovered deception practiced toward her, his eyes were lynx-like, his brain active.

But there were other heads plotting more actively than his.

As the company were returning to the parlor, the side room door opened, and Albert Arly tapped his father on the shoulder.

"Stop this way—quick."

"He! the mischief! Don't you know my hands are full? Where has your 'lady-killer' kept himself? This vagabond detective has been buzzing round your Christabel, like a bee at a poppy-blossom."

"Thank yourself for any trouble he makes, then. I was not in favor of his being invited. Come here—"

"I haven't time—"

"Come, I say!" interrupted Arly, junior, somewhat savagely. "Never mind the detective for the present. Our first plan is a failure. We have conceived another, a bold plot, to compel this marriage."

"Compel, eh? Good. That's excellent. Let me hear about it," and he eased into the room, his own closing and locking the door.

Downstairs, Gerard Vance remained with a few of the gentlemen who were enjoying cigars after the courses of wine and delicacies. He did not sit with the rest, who in their tilted chairs, smoked and talked, and talked thoughtfully to and fro, his hands behind his back, and eyes bent vacantly on the waxed floor.

"Christabel! oh, Christabel!" he breathed, lowly, "do I love you as I loved your mother before you!—a mad, wild yearning at first sight, as it was with her. And after all these years, is my soul to pass the ordeal again, to end in unhappiness as it did then. It is the fate of my miserable life. Yet I cannot flee from you, I have my vow to keep, to guard you from danger, which, I feel, is now encompassing you. Heaven give me strength for this, the second heart-battle of my life."

CHAPTER XIV.

STARTLING INTELLIGENCE.

GERARD VANCE, the detective, did not sleep during the remainder of the night on which occurred the mutual recognition between him and Christabel.

The party at Arly's adjourned shortly after midnight.

As the guests dispersed, Preston Arly posted himself beside his fair charge, and his jealous guard prevented any further private communication with her.

Albert Arly and Wynne had appeared again among the company, with profuse and plausible excuses for their absence.

At 1:30 A. M., deep silence and deeper darkness gathered round the grim old edifice.

And in the waning night, Gerard Vance strode the floor of his sleeping-apartment on North Broadway. His teeth were clinched and chewing upon a cigar, and his hands behind him were working nervously.

Unfortunately, indeed, for the plot of the Arlys, had been the invitation which made the detective figure in that evening's pleasant reunion.

Little did they dream that their rude deception was known, and more, by a man who, of all men, Albert Arly had cause to hate and fear. And even aware of this, they were yet to learn the life mission of Gerard Vance and the retribution it contained. But we have said that others, as shrewd as he, were at work.

"I cannot sleep," he fairly hissed. "The old spell is on me. I have met the living image of the woman who, so many years ago, took my heart with her to the grave. How strange, that I should have found little Christabel—no longer little Christabel—in the very toils of the man she fled from when a child. And after five years of search, I had given her up as dead. Glorious Providence! Oh, Christabel! I love you as I loved your mother. Is that passion to be put aside because you will ever seem a child to me!—or because your heart, like that of her I once worshipped, is but a marble semblance of the name?"

Then with darkening brow, and pausing suddenly in his restlessness: "What means this deception on the part of the Arlys? What vile plot is afoot with Albert Arly, in which his own offspring is the appointed victim?" Then another thought: "Christabel is ignorant of her father's perfidy. Shall she blush, in after life, knowing her mother's agony and public disgrace through his heartlessness? Ah! did I not promise my beautiful idol, fifteen years ago, that Christabel should never be pained by a recital of her mother's wrongs? Let me be cautious. My vengeance on Albert Arly must swoop as silent as swift; he must disappear utterly, without her knowing his crime. To-morrow—to-day—I would have faced him with the law. I delay. Christabel first—her story; then my vengeance!"

In this strain his thoughts and utterances flowed, not for awhile, but by the hour.

His stepping heels sunk noiselessly in the carpet, and the policeman, trudging his beat without, glanced often at the light in the window and the regularly moving shadow on the muslin curtain.

At the usual hour, Vance was at the office of the agency, on Calvert street.

From the pavement he had a view of the monument, hardly a square distant. Anon he would step out and glance about, as if in search of some one; then his gaze would roam westward along Lexington street, probably expecting to discover his object in that direction.

"What's up, Mr. Vance?" inquired a genial English gentleman, from the top of the high steps leading to the office of Fox & Fox.

"Don't expect a case to walk right into a detective's office, do you?"

"They do that thing, sometimes," replied Vance; but his mind was far from the speaker.

He had no thought but of Christabel—he was looking for her every moment.

A vain vigil. The morning passed, high noon; then it was four o'clock.

"This is unaccountable!" he exclaimed.

"What can detain her! Am I discovered? Are these Arlys playing with me, and even now pushing their plot, whatever it may be? I must exchange word with Christabel; yet, if I am seen prowling round, or if I go there, matters may climax before I am prepared. There must be no meeting, now, between Albert Arly and myself, until I go to slip the handcuffs on him—Ah!"

"Hello, Vance! got the blues?"

"The very man. Here, Will, do me a favor," and seating himself at a desk, he began scribbling on a sheet of note.

"Certainly, my dear fellow. What's it about?"

"Spot 'the house of Arly & Arly, on St. Paul street. You know it?"

"Like a book."

"And," continued Vance, "if you see a woman, beautiful as the sun, with the ideal face of a poet, eyes like stars under lashes of midnight—"

"Oh, let up, now! You're in love, or I'm a Dutchman."

The detective felt piqued at the interruption, but it sobered him somewhat.

"You haven't much to do, Will, have you?"

"No, not just now."

"Then give me your time for two hours. Go there, and watch for such a woman as I have described. I want her to get that note—no body but her, mind. This is no idle affair of love; more of a case than you dream of. I'll explain some other time. There now, hurry, please."

"All right, my duke, I'll fix it," said this opportune friend, and receiving the note, he sauntered off up Lexington street.

Personal favors are common among the detective force, and these have frequently resulted in cases of vast public importance.

Scarcely had Gerard Vance dispatched his messenger, and resumed his study of some papers on his desk, when the office door flew open with a whiz, and shut to with a bang.

The corner was Preston Arly. His supple body went bobbing directly up to the detective.

The latter had bestowed a look of surprise on this party, as he entered; now he scanned him, perplexedly.

Arly looked very pale. His small eyes were slightly inflamed, his cap knocked sideways, and adding to the general disorder of his mien, he wore a mud-smeared shirt, his cheeks were unclean, even with a beard of one day's growth.

"Mr. Vance!" he gasped, his eely body falling with a squirm into the nearest chair.

"Why, Mr. Arly, what has happened? You look terribly excited."

"Excited! Ho! thunder! man, I'm crazy. I'm in a pot of trouble. There's been an abduction."

There was one other in the room besides Arly and the detective. A young man by the name of Jack Stoner, lately employed as clerk at the agency, was scratching vigorously with his pen at an adjacent desk. At the word "abduction," he looked up from his work. Quite by accident, Arly's eyes darted toward this clerk in the same instant. And as the glances of the two met, each conceived an antipathy for the other.

Thought old Arly:

"Furies on that young vagabond! why did he look at me so suddenly? Not that he hasn't a right to look, but because he acted as if he knew something about the abduction, which wouldn't be very pleasant for me if he did."

And thought the clerk:

"That old man is a villain, or I'm a sinner! Look at his eyes—they are snapping with wickedness; look at his face—it tells of deceit; look at his mouth, with its sharp, scraggy teeth—it is the mouth of a dog that will bite the hand that pats the head. I wouldn't trust him with a ten-cent stamp. Can it be that what I saw last night had anything to do with this abduction he seems so flurried over?"

At the announcement of the abduction, Gerard Vance had started perceptibly. Naturally, his first and whole surmise was that it affected Christabel. In the next moment this conjecture was confirmed.

"Abduction, Mr. Arly! Who?"

"Christabel," shouted the wriggling anatomy. "Christabel, my darling, my beautiful. She's gone—gone—gone!" and as he uttered the last three words, he accompanied each with an up and down motion of the hands and arms, involving the whole body, while his two bent legs kept time on the matting, and his other face contorted ruefully.

It was with difficulty that the detective controlled his emotions. The intelligence was like the blow of a sledge. For a moment he was overcome by a dizzy sensation; then there settled a terrible calmness in him.

Thought of danger menacing one whom he was now loving with all the wild, passionate adoration once bestowed upon her mother, seemed to steel every nerve and sharpen every faculty.

Preston Arly's announcement was affecting the detective far more, and in a manner he could never have imagined.

"Have you any idea at what time, or how, the act was accomplished?" he asked, forcing a calmness that mocked his inner self.

"No, no, how should I? I witnessed the old hypocrite, dolefully. 'But, stop; it must have been between two and daylight, and they must have taken her in a cab, I think; for how else could they bear her safely through the streets?'"

"No doubt—in a cab," agreed Vance, half-absently.

At this juncture the young clerk arose abruptly from his chair.

"Mr. Vance, I think I may know something of this. I was down in Canton last night, and—" he had got this far, when he was interrupted in a terrific way.

One of old Arly's snaky arms darted toward Vance's desk, and the claw-of-a-hand snatched up a book lying there. This book went whizzing through the air, sent by a sidelong jerk, and struck the young man squarely in the mouth.

The action was so sudden, the stroke so unexpected and severe, that, before Jack Stoner could comprehend exactly what had happened, he found himself dancing about, raging with pain, two of his front teeth cracked, and blood streaming over his chin.

"Rascal!" yelled Arly, furiously, while he slid forward to the extreme edge of his chair, and shook both fists at the cowering clerk.

"Vagabond! I'll teach you to keep that mouth of yours out of other people's business!" and then his rat-eyes fell wistfully on the ink-stand, as if he would like to send that article after the book.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 321.)

"May they always live in peace and harmony," was the way a marriage notice should have wound up; but the compositor, who couldn't read manuscript very well, put in type, and horrified the happy couple by making it read: "May they always live on peas and hominy."

Base-Ball.

BY HENRY CHADWICK.

THE PROFESSIONAL ARENA.

The first regular contest in base-ball skill between professional representative nines of the East and West was commenced in Brooklyn, Hartford, Boston and Philadelphia on May 23d, the schedule of games arranged in the League pennant series including matches every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, from May 23d to June 17th, inclusive.

The programme laid down—and an excellent one it is, too—is as follows: The St. Louis play the Mutuals May 23, 25, 27; the Athletics May 30, June 1, 3; the Hartford June 6, 8, 10; the Boston June 13, 15, 17. Chicago play the Hartford May 23, 25, 27; the Boston May 30, June 1, 3; the Athletics June 6, 8, 10; the Mutuals June 13, 15, 17. Cincinnati club play the Boston May 23, 25, 27; the Hartford May 30, June 1, 3; the Mutuals June 6, 8, 10; the Athletics June 13, 15, 17. Louisville club play the Athletics May 23, 25, 27; the Mutuals May 30, June 1, 3; the Boston June 6, 8, 10; the Hartford June 13, 15, 17.

The close of the first series of engagements West vs. East, in June, will enable our readers to judge pretty nearly what the probabilities will be in regard to who are to be the "coming champions."

The Western delegation visit the Eastern clubs under circumstances well calculated to add to their record of victories, inasmuch as the strong nine of the Mutual club will be met out of good form for successful play, and the nines of the Boston and Athletic clubs will be met with experimental nines, and entirely out of that regular training position they—the "Reds," at least—have hitherto been placed in. That the West will find themselves victorious in a majority of the games they will play on their first Eastern tour we have but little doubt. Their pitching and catching strength, to say nothing of their fielding support, being decidedly in advance of that of the East in a majority of instances. Spalding and White, with the field they have to back them, will run through the East from Boston to Philadelphia with but few defeats to check their victorious career. Bradley and Clapp, too, will meet with but little opposition, and Devlin and Snyder will, no doubt, make up for their defeats out West by their victories East; and Fisher and Pearson will give the Eastern nines far more trouble than was anticipated a month ago. The East will have that same old "glorious uncertainty" of the game to help them at times, as it did the Cincinnati in April. But the minority of the victories out of the four weeks' play will remain with the East.

The League pennant championship record up to May 22d, inclusive, is as follows:

Clubs.	Athletic.	Boston.	Chicago.	Cincinnati.	Hartford.	Louisville.	Mutual.	St. Louis.	Games won.
Athletic.....	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Boston.....	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Chicago.....	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10
Cincinnati.....	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	8
Hartford.....	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
Louisville.....	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	14
Mutual.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
St. Louis.....	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Games lost.	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40

IN JUNETIME.

BY EBBE E. REXFORD.

Under the trees in the Junetime I lie,
And we whisper together, sweet Nature and I.
Over my head, in the wide azure arch,
I see the cloud-armies go out on a march.
Here is a straggler, and there a recruit,
Both clad in the white of the cloud-soldier's suit.
I see, flying up from the green earth below,
A messenger-bird, who bears tidings, I know,
To the sentinel clouds who are watching the world,
From the crags where the flags of the sky are unfurled.
The wind whispers softly a secret to me:
It has seen the first rose of June kissed by a bee!
And it says that the violets blow on the hills,
Where the air is as soft with the ripple of rills.
And the song of the robin, and carol of wren,
Who are happy to-day with the children of men.
I hear the roots growing, all hidden away,
When I lie down and listen, this happy June day.
I see in the grass, where the brown crickets hide
Rehearsing a concert for eventide.
I would be a bird to fly up and away,
And beat my wings at the gates of day.
I would be a cloud to go floating far,
And bask in the smile of the Evening Star.
I would be a wind from the passionate south,
Sweet as a kiss from a dainty mouth.
I would be a bee to woo the rose,
Till its fragrant heart to my lips uncloses.
But were I a blossom, a bird, or bee,
What would my love do for loss of me?

Without a Heart:

WALKING ON THE BRINK.
A STORY OF LIFE'S SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "GIVEN FOR GOLD," "THE FLY-
ING YANKEE," "THE MEXICAN SPY,"
"TRACKED THROUGH LIFE."

CHAPTER XXVII.

WILDLIDE.

UPON the sea-washed shore of a sunny southern State was Wildlode, the new home of Colonel Erskine.

A more beautiful home heart could not desire, for the villa was a handsome, commodious structure, with deep bay-windows and broad piazzas, and from its front and east wing a broad view of the ocean could be obtained with jutting points and wooded isles up and down the coast.

Around the mansion, to the south and west, were a lovely lawn and flower-garden, while to the northward ranged an extensive park of lordly trees, through which bounded a number of graceful deer, led by a fleet-footed monarch of the forest, with large spreading antlers and nimble feet.

Back of the mansion, at some distance, were the stable and out-houses, built upon a similar plan to the house, and a quarter of a mile away, forming a crescent around the white beach of a small bay, were a score of neat-looking cottages, the "quarters" of the servants of Wildlode.

A fountain here and there, a piece of marble statuary, white shell walks, flower-bespangled beds, and rolling lawns of velvet grass, with the constantly changing ocean scenery, rendered the surroundings of Wildlode beautiful in deed, while Gothic and rustic summer-houses invited loungers into their cool and quiet retreats.

Running out into the water, some fifty feet, was a neat pier, with a small arbor upon the end, and here there were arranged comfortable seats, for those who cared to watch the restless waters coming in from the sea beyond.

Around the pier, gently rising and falling upon the waters, were a small pleasure-yacht and several gaily painted row-boats, with velvet cushions and striped awnings, which rendered them most comfortable.

Entering the grand and massive looking mansion, on every side was luxury, and everywhere an air of comfort prevailed, from the broad hallway to the spacious parlors, inviting library, and cool and extensive dining-room.

Upstairs were the sleeping chambers, large, convenient, luxuriously furnished, and sufficient in number to accommodate a score of guests, for the former master of Wildlode was a genial and hospitable host—far too much so for his own good.

In the library, lolling back in an easy chair, and gazing listlessly, and yet admiringly, out over the quiet waters of the little bay, and out upon the restless waves of the sea beyond, was the new lord and master of Wildlode, Colonel Erskine.

In the large bow-window, an open book upon her lap, sat a maiden.

So completely metamorphosed was Everard Ainslie, from a handsome, graceful youth of twenty, apparently, into a lovely, brilliant maiden of eighteen, that none would have recognized her.

Dressed in a morning-robe of white lawn, that fitted her elegant form to perfection, and with her massive braids of hair fastened with a silver comb in one coil at the back of her haughty head, Eve Ainslie was indeed a wondrously lovely woman—one that few men could gaze upon unmoved by her charms.

Upon her quiet features there was no ruffle of discontent—no footprints of an embittered life—no sign that her life was a lie—her face was an impenetrable mask.

She had cast the die—she had made a false confession, and her words had been believed by those who loved her.

By the falsehood she had gained a lovely home, a kind father, a loving brother—and wealth.

But would she not have gained all these had she been sincere in her confession—had she told the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Such would the "still, small voice" of her conscience sometimes ask her, and she had to admit, knowing as she did both Colonel Erskine and his noble son, that their kindness toward her would have been the same, even though she was a deserted wife.

But then it was not politic for Eve to have it known that it was not politic that she had said she was, for she was playing for a higher game than she had so far won—a game, to gain which, she would have to break the laws of God and man; but what cared a woman without heart for these?

For several weeks had Colonel Erskine and Eve been in their new home, enjoying to their heart's content the balmy air of the South, the perfume of the innumerable flowers, the sweet trilling of feathered songsters, gliding over the rippling waters, and indulging in literary and musical feasts in the library and music-room.

So calmly, so softly, did the days glide away in this Eden-like home; so loving, so kind, was Eve, that Colonel Erskine almost ceased to

mourn for poor Florice, for his newly-adopted daughter proved to him all that he could wish, and he thanked God for the day when she crossed his path, for to her he owed it that his days, gliding toward the grave, were not passed in gloom and despair.

CHAPTER XIX.

LA BELLE COQUETTE.

As the days glided by at Wildlode the neighboring families called upon the new-comers, and Colonel Erskine and Eve soon found themselves courted as general favorites.

This was just what Eve most desired, for she was anxious to prove still further the power she felt that she possessed over men; but, with Colonel Erskine it was different, for he had been happy in the dreamy life he had led for a few weeks after his arrival at Wildlode.

Still he was a most hospitable host, and was fond of company, and therefore greeted all visitors in his genial, kindly manner.

As the beaux of the surrounding country began to flock around her, Eve Ainslie launched forth upon the fathomless sea of coquetry, and day after day threw her chains of love's bondage around some new admirer, holding him as she had held all others, her very slave.

With her triumph her joy and her ambition arose—joy that she could lay her hand upon the name of any one of society's lions and cause him to kneel at her feet, and ambition to still further ascend the grade of victory, that when Clarence Erskine came to Wildlode, upon his promised visit, he would find her a queen over all, and one who held full sway over men and women alike.

Quickly through the land flew the news of her beauty, her wit, her scathing sarcasm, and everywhere were her splendid horsemanship, her superb voice, her skill as a musician, and other accomplishments discussed, while the name of *La Belle Coquette* was bestowed upon her by a gay bachelor planter, who had never been dazzled by the beauties of Europe, but had come home to be flirted with by an American girl.

But one of Eve's strong points in coquetry was never to make an enemy of a discarded lover, for, did she refuse his love, she made him feel that she really needed his friendship, and in this way she held her power over them still, and kept them fluttering around the flame of her beauty and wit like poor candle-flies, anxious, seemingly, to receive injury from so brilliant a destroyer.

The young bachelor, above referred to, lived alone on a superb estate, left him by his parents' death, ere he was of age.

Passing a number of years in Europe, Paul Launcelot had at last returned home, at the age of thirty, to retrace his wanderings, and a few months after his arrival Eve Ainslie had risen above the horizon of his life, and drawn him at once to her side, though many a fair maiden of the neighborhood had given up all idea of ever netting his obdurate heart, for he escaped all love-traps set for him.

When at last his heart was smitten, Paul Launcelot went by the board, for he became Eve Ainslie's very shadow.

At length the telling of the same old story came, and the bachelor planter was refused.

Yet so kindly, so affectionately, almost, did Eve refuse the proffer of the three treasures devoutly sought after by many of her sex—his heart, his hand, and his fortune—that she attached him to her as her *best friend*, so she told him he should be, and with that honor Paul Launcelot was compelled to be content, and almost seemed so, while, in a quiet way, he enjoyed seeing other men singe their wings and flitter back wounded and mournful.

One bright morning, when the inmates of Wildlode arose, they saw a trim-looking vessel of war anchored out in the little bay, it having sought shelter there during the darkness of the preceding night.

On that vessel Eve Ainslie soon found two more admirers—the one Captain Burt Lambert, a dashing, handsome young sailor of twenty-six, and the commander of the rakish-looking revenue cutter *Eaglet*—the other Howard Moulton, first lieutenant of the *Eaglet*, and a step-brother of his captain, for the widower father of Howard had married the widowed mother of Burt, when the latter was a mere boy of six, and the former ten years his senior.

As soon as breakfast was over, the morning after the arrival of the *Eaglet* in the bay, Colonel Erskine had summoned his six negro carmen, and gone on board the cutter, where he was warmly welcomed by Captain Lambert, who informed him that he had been ordered to that part of the coast, to watch for certain illegal traffickers upon the waters.

From that day both Burt Lambert and Howard Moulton became constant visitors at Wildlode, and before one week passed the brothers were desperately in love with Eve Ainslie, who almost seemed momentarily dazzled by the splendid appearance and glittering uniform of the handsome young sea captain, for her kindness toward him made many a brave heart ache.

CHAPTER XX.

FACE TO FACE.

ONE pleasant afternoon, some weeks after the arrival of the *Eaglet* in the little bay, Captain Burt Lambert was rowed to the pier at Wildlode, and landing, sent his card in to Miss Erskine, for, at the urgent desire of her adopted father, Eve had dropped her own name of Ainslie.

Soon the maiden appeared, looking queenly beautiful in her dark-blue riding-habit and hat and plume, for she had made an engagement with the young captain for a gallop over the country.

Soon the horses were brought round, two of the finest in the Wildlode stables, and mounting, away dashed the handsome couple, anxiously eyed from the library window by Colonel Erskine, for, though he admired the young commander exceedingly, he dreaded lest Eve should learn to love him, a result he prayed against most sincerely, for he had hoped that Clarence would dlove the maiden when he saw her metamorphosed from the youth whose life he had so ably defended from the merciless clutches of the old-fashioned law.

Down a lovely road, heavily wooded upon either side by the dense forest, and containing a view of the bay and ocean upon the other, rode the officer and his fair companion, his face slightly clouded, her face bright, tinged with the excitement of her ride, and as serenely beautiful as though no storm-clouds of sorrow and trouble had swept over it.

Out upon the bosom of the bay, her delicate spurs and rigging traced against the blue sky beyond, lay the *Eaglet* at anchor, fully a league away.

Pointing toward his beautiful vessel, Captain Lambert said, with some enthusiasm:

"Miss Erskine, for years past I have known but one lady-love—my vessel."

"When a mere boy, a midshipman on a vessel-of-war cruising in foreign seas, I never felt

homesick, for I looked upon my ship as my home; and when I at length rose in rank, and was detached from the navy and ordered to the command of a revenue cutter, my little *Eaglet* became my home and my love—my heart's dearest idol."

"It is strange that yourself and brother should both be on the same vessel," said Eve, quietly, as if desiring to draw the captain away from a tender subject.

"Yes; but I am glad it is so, for I love Howard dearly."

"You know that we are step-brothers, and that he is ten years my senior?"

"Yes, and I like Lieutenant Moulton exceedingly."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Miss Erskine, for poor Howard has had a rather unhappy life."

"Indeed! will you tell me?"

"There is little to tell, excepting that he entered the navy at an early age, and was rising rapidly in his profession, when a quarrel with his superior officer ended in a duel, in which he fell by Howard's hands."

"There were palliating circumstances in the case in Howard's behalf; but he was dismissed the service; and, I am sorry to say, became reckless and dissipated, and in a few years ran through his fortune, and was almost penniless in the world."

"At length, through the influence of our family, he was appointed to the command of the *Eaglet*, in the revenue service, for he had reformed completely when he had no more means at his disposal."

"Unfortunately I was ordered to the *Eaglet* shortly after, and ranking Howard, of course took command—he showing no ill-feeling toward me whatever, and to-day we are the best of friends, as well as brothers, and no better officer than Howard Moulton treads a ship's deck."

"Your loves and hatreds are doubtless very strong, Captain Lambert—at least such is my estimate of you," said Eve, and as though a match had been unwittingly thrown into powder Burt Lambert burst forth:

"Ay, my loves and hates are strong, and with my whole soul, my whole being, I love you, Eve—hold! hear me through, and then let me know my fate."

"Awhile since I told you that, in the past, my ship had been my home, my lady-love."

"Now I tell you that I would see my loved vessel and all it contains wrecked upon yonder jagged and wild reef rather than lose your love, ay, even your friendship."

"It is getting late; suppose we return, captain," and Eve brought her spirited horse to the right-about, her companion following her example, while a shadow of disappointment swept over his face.

As they turned, a horseman suddenly confronted them, having been riding but a short distance behind, and unseen by both Burt and Eve.

One glance into that dark, strangely handsome face, and upon that elegant, graceful form, and Eve's face turned deadly pale, while she reeled, as though about to fall from her saddle.

The horseman's face also changed color, and well it might, for Eve Ainslie and Claude Clinton had again crossed each other's path—yes, those two, so strangely met, so strangely parted; husband and wife had again come face to face!

CHAPTER XXI.

CLINTON CLARENDON.

WITH a tremendous effort of self-control, Eve regained her composure, and gave Claude Clinton a cool stare, as though she never had before met him, while upon his part, he seemed as though about to speak; but, guided by her manner, touched his hat politely, and passed by, on one side.

So taken up with his own feelings, and recognizing in Claude Clinton one whom he had met before, Captain Lambert did not observe the pallor that swept over the faces of the man and the woman, nor did he notice the swaying motion of Eve, as though she were about to fall from her saddle.

In a moment Claude Clinton had continued on, while Eve sat, quietly:

"Are you acquainted with the gentleman to whom you just bowed, Captain Lambert?"

"Incidentally only," almost impatiently returned the young officer, who felt that his *tête-à-tête* with Eve had been interrupted at a most inopportune moment for his love-making.

Eve was about to inquire still further into the acquaintance, when Captain Lambert continued, for he felt that he had spoken abruptly perhaps.

"A few days since Mr. Clarendon, for such is the name of the gentleman, was passing by the anchorage of the *Eaglet*, in a small yacht, and a squall coming up he split his mainsail, and I hailed him to come aboard and repair damages."

"He accepted the invitation, and while my sailmaker mended the rent, I invited the gentleman into the cabin, and over a glass of wine found him a most agreeable companion."

"Is he a resident of this neighborhood?"

"Yes; or that is, he told me he lived on a plantation several leagues down the coast—one he had lately purchased, I judged from his conversation; but you seem singularly interested in a stranger," and a pang of jealousy flashed into the heart of the young officer.

"He reminds me of one I have known well in the past. You say his name is Clarendon?"

"Yes, Clinton Clarendon—such was the name on the card he gave me—ah! here he comes back, and at a gallop."

As Captain Lambert spoke there was heard the sound of quickly clattering hoofs, and a moment after up dashed the same horseman they had just met.

Drawing rein, and politely raising his hat, he said, addressing Captain Lambert:

"Pardon me, sir; but a small row-boat, with the name *Eve* painted on its stern, drifted ashore upon my beach last night; can I ask if it is not the property of the lady with you?"

"Allow me, Miss Erskine, to present Mr. Clarendon, and then you can answer for yourself," said Captain Lambert.

The man bent low in his saddle with uncovered head at the introduction; the woman bowed, and smiled her sweetest smile, while she answered in her softest tones:

"It is my little boat, sir; it broke loose the other night while I was towing astern of the yacht, and as the wind was fresh, and the night dark, we failed to observe its loss until our arrival home, for my father and myself had been dining on board the *Eaglet*. It was kind of you, sir, to take the trouble to—"

"Not at all, Miss Erskine; to-morrow I will send you the waif—"

"Will you not let it bring you to Wildlode? My father, Colonel Erskine, will be glad to meet you, Mr. Clarendon."

The man looked searchingly into the fair face, and a doubt of identity swept across his mind, for it was as serene and pleasant as though no unpleasant remembrances were summoned up from the buried past at the sight of his face.

"Thank you, Miss Erskine; I will bring back Eve to the Eden from whence it strayed."

"Captain Lambert, I will be glad to entertain you, sir, any time you feel pleased to visit Cliffside. Good-evening."

Raising his hat, and again casting a searching glance into the face of Eve, Claude turned his steed quickly and rode away, while the others also continued their ride toward Wildlode—Burt Lambert anathematizing in his heart the incident that had so inopportune broken into his avowal of love.

When Clinton Clarendon, as he evidently now called himself, rode away, he kept on at a rapid pace until a bend of the road hid him from view, then he drew rein and rode meditatively along, his thoughts a chaos of conflicting emotions.

"No, I thought I could not be mistaken in that face," he mused.

"No, it is Eve, my wife; it was a lucky thought of mine—the boat; it convinced me in my suspicion. Pah! did not her emotion at sight of me show that she was the Eve I had known before?"

"But, why is she here? and how is it I hear her addressing Colonel Erskine as her father?"

"Report says he is worth millions—that he has an only daughter and an only son—and my Eve is that daughter."

"I must solve this mystery—I will solve it, for she will tell me all, for did she not ask me to call?"

"Strange that she should, in one glance, regain her influence over me, for I believe I would be her slave, did she so bid me."

"And, by Heaven! how beautiful she has grown! She is a perfect queen, and I do not wonder now that the men of the neighborhood have gone mad with love for Eve Erskine."

"And she knew me, and—still loves me; but, she does not suspect!"

"Yes, I must tell her a long story of how Mark Leslie dogged me day and night, until, driven to desperation, I struck him down, and that act caused me to fly from the gallows."

"Oh, God! how the memory of that fatal night rushes over me; but I must smother remorse, for I have not the cowardly heart to let despair crush me down."

"Yes, I will tell Eve, in part, the truth—how I became a wanderer in Western lands, and saving the life of a wealthy miner, was made his heir when he died, a few weeks after."

"To hide myself from all who knew me, and still fearing detection for that fatal deed in God's sanctuary, I will tell her that I took the name of my benefactor, and my father having disinherited me, I sought this land, because I had heard that she was here, and longed to be near her."

"Yes, I can make up a good story, in which there is a grain of truth, and then set to work to win Eve back to me, for I must not lose her. No, no, no, she is mine now, but before the world I must make her Mrs. Clinton Clarendon. If she refuse, then I must use my power and force her to my wish, for Eve Erskine is too valuable a prize to let slip through my fingers."

Urging his horse forward, as though having fully made up his mind to his course, Clinton Clarendon, as I must now call him, dashed on at a rapid pace, and in an hour's time drew rein in front of a small, but handsome, plantation home, situated upon the coast, and with a rolling lawn sloping down to the beach.

Throwing his bridle-rein to a negro servant, the supposed bachelor owner of Cliffside entered his cozy mansion, and sat down to the inviting supper that awaited his coming.

But the food was untasted, and the master seemed ill at ease, for the home he had purchased, where he could hide away from those who had known him before, seemed to have betrayed a skeleton in its closet.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 323.)

The Masked Miner:

OR,
THE IRON-MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

A TALE OF PITTSBURG.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER,
AUTHOR OF "UNDER BAIL," "SILKEN CORD."

CHAPTER XXVII.

OLD LANDMARKS.

WHEN the new-comer had alighted from the cur he passed quickly through the extensive depot, and, reaching the street, paused a moment and gazed about him. Noticing that several persons were eying him closely, he turned away at once to the Monongahela House omnibus, which was in waiting. Depositing several baggage-checks in the hands of the driver, he wrapped his cloak around him, and shrunk away in his seat as if disliking observation.

There were a large number of passengers by this train, and the omnibus was kept waiting for a considerable length of time.

Opposite the stranger, two gentlemen—apparently citizens of the place, and who had evidently gotten in to ride down-town—had just entered and seated themselves. A remark from one of them made the new-comer start, and hastily turn his head. But he instantly checked himself without creating observation, and nestled back still further in his seat. His ears were open, however.

"Yes, you are right," said one of the gentlemen; "it's a strange piece of work."

"Fairleigh Somerville is a wide-awake man," answered he who had first spoken. "He has made his way up rapidly. But I would have never dreamed he held claims against poor old Harley to such an amount."

"Nor I; and is it really true that he has taken possession of the fine mansion this very day?"

"Yes, I was by there this morning. Somerville is a man of the world, and I fear has but little heart. He turned the old man and his daughter out into the street! I saw the girl leading her poor old father off."

"Sorry, indeed; but Mr. Harley was very unwise in his speculations. Where are they now?"

"I don't know exactly, but I think they are in one of his old tenement-houses on the Common."

"Well, strange things often happen!" said the other, after a pause. "Four years ago Richard Harley was reputed one of the wealthiest men in Allegheny city; now, he is worse than bankrupt, if report be true; he is in absolute want!"

"Yes; and the strangest part of the affair is, that the man who has legally, of course, ousted him from the mansion, was, two years ago, a suitor for the hand of poor Grace, and I much fear that, in return for her evident dislike of him, he has wreaked a revenge by involving the old man."

Just then the omnibus, having received its load, rattled off, and the conversation ceased. The stranger had sat like a statue; he had heard every word.

The hotel was soon reached.

The name written by this conspicuous look-

ing person on the books at the Monongahela House, and which may still be seen by the curious, was:

"FELIX MORTON."

But the name stood alone; it was not followed by residence. At tea, Mr. Morton descended from his room, partook lightly and hastily of the meal, and, arising from the table, put on his overcoat, and left the hotel. He seemed a little nervous, but no one noticed it.

On leaving the hotel the gentleman walked down Water street to Wood. He pursued his way along this thoroughfare until he reached Fifth avenue. Turning abruptly down this, and as if thoroughly familiar with the city, he hurried on toward the river. Crossing the Allegheny on the Suspension bridge, he walked straight on up Federal street, to Stockton avenue. There he paused.

The lamps were now lit, for night had settled down. Feeling in his pocket, the white-bearded, stalwart stranger drew out a letter or a memorandum-slip.

"This all right!" he muttered. "I must see if this fearful tale be true! I must go on, for Tom's sake!"

Turning into Stockton avenue, he started forward again. Finally he reached the Harley mansion. He halted at the iron gate; then, suddenly entering, he approached the great hall-door to read by the glaring street-lamp, on a new, glittering door-plate, the name:

"FAIRLEIGH SOMERVILLE."

The stranger turned as if to retreat, while a deathly pallor spread over his face.

"My God! so soon!" he muttered. "Then 'tis true! Alas! alas! and yet—" He paused, and as if impelled by frenzy, faced about again and pulled the bell with a steady hand.

In a moment the door was opened, and a pompous servant in livery stood there.

"Does Mr. Richard Harley live here?"

"Richard Harley? No, indeed," said the domestic, somewhat superciliously; "though he slept here no longer ago than last night!" and the man smiled scornfully.

"Ah! And where, then, does the old gentleman live?" asked the stranger.

"Can't exactly say; we know very little about them; but the old man lives somewhere on Cedar avenue, I think—t'other side of the Common."

"Ah! Yes, and—" he slipped some coins as he spoke into the man's hand, "and is his daughter, Miss Grace Harley, still with her father?"

"Yes, sir; she has nowhere else to go. But, sir," and the man, who had readily unbent his dignity, sunk his voice familiarly, "people do say that the girl is crazy—stark mad, and has been for many a day, all about a venturesome rascal by the name of Tom Worth, a miner that was, who stole her away once, and who, having broke jail, was drowned trying to get away."

"Ah! you surprise me. And—"

But, just then the tall, slender form of Somerville entered the brilliantly-lit hallway from the supper-room. His face as it showed in the bright light was flushed with a triumphant glow—maybe with wine.

The stranger drew back in the shade, and saying, curtly, "Thank you, my man," turned upon his heel and entered the street again.

An hour from that time, a low but decided rap sounded on the door of old Ben Walford's cabin, over on the cliff. The summons was promptly answered by the old man. When he had opened the door, the tall, aristocratic stranger entered.

Old Ben gazed earnestly and wonderingly at him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEWS FOR OLD BEN.

"DOES Ben Walford live here?" asked the stranger, in a deep voice.

Old Ben still gazed at him.

The lapse of two years had not made much change in the appearance of the old man. The same long iron-gray hair fell over his jacket-collar; the same good-natured, independent look sat on his age-seamed face; the same Herculean muscles swelled on his arms as he flew and extended those members in stroking his chin. He was the same honest old Ben, the miner; but a shade of more than usual sadness clouded his face.

He bowed respectfully to the imposing-looking stranger, and said:

"Yes, sir, old Ben Walford lives here, and he is not ashamed of his name—why, I am the man."

A smile spread over the face of the gentleman as he looked full into the honest countenance of the other. Then he suddenly strode forward, and, much to the old man's astonishment, caught his hand, horny hand in his own soft but firm grip.

And was Tom well, sir? Was he still mindful of old Ben? And where was he, sir, when he gave you the message for me?"

The stranger started, but, after a moment's hesitation, replied:

"Tom was well, and always spoke of you with the warmest affection. When I saw him, some months ago, he was far away from this! But Tom has been fortunate, since he was here."

"Fortunate? And how, sir? I know he had good luck in some things, but to what do you refer?"

"He has had a good deal of money left him," replied the stranger, quietly, glancing at the old man.

"I'm glad, indeed, to hear it, sir," said Ben, promptly; "for if ever man deserved the smiles of heaven, Tom Worth was that man! To tell you the truth, Mr. Morton, and he drew his chair confidentially toward the richly-clad gentleman, "there was something strange about Tom—that boy of mine. He was wonderful book-learned, sir, and though he had thews of steel and muscles of iron, and a fist that could shiver an inch-thick oak plank, yet that hand, though he worked in the mine, was always so white, so fine, so like a gentleman's, sir, that I often thought, though I didn't say it, that Tom was not exactly what he seemed to be. And then, Mr. Morton, Tom was so gentle, so respectful, sir, to the women. And I tell you, sir, that such a man is a true man, and one as don't forget he has had a mother, sir."

The stranger listened intently, his eyes fixed on the old man's face—those eyes wet still.

"You speak words of wisdom, my friend," he said in a low voice, one deeply enthusiastic from emotion, "and you are right—such men are true men."

"Yes, Mr. Morton; and Tom Worth was one of them! And then, too, in a rough-and-tumble, my stars, sir! he was a perfect lion, and—But do you know his story, sir? He had a little trouble hereabouts!"

The old man spoke cautiously.

"Yes," replied the stranger; "I know Tom Worth's story, every word, and I know, too, that Tom was innocent."

"Innocent? Of course he was! And he would be a brave man, as I have said more than once, who would contradict me! Though—though—truth be told, for a long time, Tom himself would not say whether or not he was."

"Perhaps he had his reasons," suggested Mr. Morton, softly.

"Of course, sir, of course!" was the reply. "That was Tom! Reasons for everything, and good ones! God be thanked that I have heard from him again!"

A silence of some minutes ensued, the stranger bending his head in thought, old Ben sitting with his eyes half closed, a pleasant smile spreading over his countenance as his mind, doubtless, was traveling back over the past. The old man was thinking of Tom Worth, and the other was thinking of—what?

Suddenly the old man broke the silence by saying:

"You have brought me news, Mr. Morton—good, glorious news for me, and the same for another," and he glanced familiarly at the stranger, as if courting a confidence.

Mr. Morton started; his face flushed slightly, and his mustached lip trembled. But he asked, quietly:

"What do you mean, Mr. Walford?"

"Why, sir, there can be no harm in telling you, for you are Tom's friend. Why, sir, Tom was a handsome lad, and he had, truth be told, a wondrous way with the women. And, sir—why Tom was in love, and in love with a rich man's daughter."

The old man paled.

Mr. Morton drew still nearer to the miner, his gaze fixed upon him earnestly, expectantly.

"Well, Mr. Walford?"

"And, sir, the girl—God bless her for a noble woman—loved Tom more than any plain, blunt words of mine can tell you, sir. And she would have married Tom in spite of everything had my boy stayed; but, poor thing—"

Again the old man paled.

Mr. Morton was now showing signs of excitement. He placed his hand upon the old man's arm, and said, in a deep whisper:

"Yes, yes, Mr. Walford; what of this poor girl, who loved the humble Tom Worth of those days?"

"Why, sir, poor thing, she has almost grieved herself to death after him. In spite of all I could say and swear to her, she believes Tom is dead—was drowned, sir. Why—would you believe it—she has been wearing black for Tom for these two years past! Don't that show love, sir? Again I say, may God bless that woman!"

"Amen!" echoed Mr. Morton, and a tear dimmed his eye; nor did the turning of his head conceal his emotion from old Ben.

"And now, sir, the other part of your good news," said the miner, softly, "is that I can tell Miss Grace positively that Tom is not dead, and that, perhaps, nay, I know it, sir! that, though he is rich now, yet he is true to her still!"

"Ay, my friend! True to the death!" said the stranger, somewhat vehemently—so much so, indeed, that old Ben glanced at him quickly.

"But," continued Mr. Morton, as he saw the effect of his words, "it will not do now to tell the—this young lady of me. We will wait; I have my reasons."

"Of course, sir, of course. And I am so glad to hear from Tom; I'd almost be willing to die without ever more seeing old England if my eyes could fall on Tom. God grant it."

"You may see him yet, Mr. Walford, who knows?" said the stranger, quickly. "But," he continued, as if recollecting himself, "I have with me a letter from Tom for you. Here it is," and he drew it from his pocket and handed it over.

The old man took it with an air almost reverential; fondled it for a moment in his large hands, and gazed affectionately at the superscription.

"Yes, 'tis from Tom!" he muttered; "I know his writing—so clear, so strong and fine, like printing! But, sir, my old eyes are dim; read that letter for me. I would not miss a single word for ten dollars in gold! Read it, sir, for me. If you are a friend of Tom Worth, and I believe you are, there can be no secrets in it from you. Read it, Mr. Morton; for, though your beard is white, your eyes—I know it—are younger and sharper than mine."

The stranger started at these words, and a smile flashed over his face; but, he took the letter, opened it, and spread out the sheet. As he did so, several bank-notes fell down. The stranger quietly picked them up and laid them on the table.

The old miner looked at the money, and then bowed his head.

"I will read Tom's letter if you are ready," said Mr. Morton, after a pause, in a low voice.

"Read, read on, sir," and the old man did not raise his head.

After another moment's hesitation, the stranger read in a steady, but subdued voice, as follows:

"DEAR BEN: "God be thanked that I can write to you again, and tell you that I have not forgotten you! Though many long months have rolled by since we parted on the banks of the river, yet, Ben, you are dear to me still. I have undergone much since I last saw you—ay, suffered much, but through all I have remembered you, the only true friend I ever had! I am far away now, Ben—far away from you and our dear old cabin on the hillside where you and your boy have passed so many happy, honest hours together—"

The stranger's voice wavered; old Ben's giant frame shook like an aspen leaf.

"And, Ben, it may be," resumed the stranger, reading from the letter, "that we will never meet there. If such should be God's will, how to it, Ben, and pray with me, that we may meet in the bright hereafter. I have inclosed to you, Ben, notes to the value of one hundred pounds—the money of your native land—old England, so dear to you. I can afford it. Take it, Ben; it comes a free gift from one who loves you more tenderly than words can tell. Good-by, Ben—I cannot say *forever*; but, should it be decreed that we meet no more on earth, do your whole part as a God-fearing man to meet me in the better land. May God bless you!"

For five minutes there was a complete silence; and then, as if fearing to speak, the old miner slowly raised his tear-bedewed face.

"I'll do it, Tom! I'll do it!" he whispered, in a deep tone, as if addressing the shade of his absent friend. "Trust me, Tom, for, with God's help, I will do it—I will do *all*, anything to meet you again, my noble boy!"

He took the notes, pressed them silently to his lips, and placed them away in his bosom, as if they were souvenirs too sacred to place elsewhere.

The stranger's bosom heaved; his own stalwart frame shook; a pearly tear dropped down, and then another, and another, on his long white beard. He laid the open letter on the table, and rising, turned without a word to the door.

Suddenly, however, quick as lightning, he faced the old man, and as he raised his tall form, his chest rising and falling tumultuously, he cried aloud:

"BEN!"

One wild, startled look, a convulsive gasping, and the old man reeled and fell forward, his brawny arms, now nerveless, clutching the other passionately around the neck.

"God be praised!" was all old Ben could say, as he drew the form of the richly-clad stranger to his bosom, and held him there in a giant's grasp.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 318.)

A DREAM OF PEARLS.

BY F. X. HALIFAX.

I dreamed one night, one beautiful night, That I was away on the shores of Ceylon; And I saw the palm trees—lovely sight—Waving above me, one by one. And methought I was a dashing diver strong—A diver searching for hidden pearls; And my comrades sang an orient song: (E'en now before me the vision whirls!) E'en now before me the vision whirls! And I see the wild-eyed ocean bird, As he dips his wings with a hollow scream And sails away; and I hear the word: And I dive to the depths—so runs my dream—I dive away from the beautiful scene. I dive deep down in the waters green; And I find in the bed of the treacherous sea, The hungry, roaring, awful sea, Where the porpoise swim and the serpents crawl, The fairest and rarest pearl of all.

The days of prophecy are not gone, And dreams are true though wild and strange; And hope, like a tide, comes surging on; That I may some day find the one The fairest and rarest of all to me—Somewhere in the treasure house of life, Of human life; the one divine That forever and ever will mine; With eyes like stars and hair like wine, And a form like an angel's—somewhere, yes, In the sea of life, dark, fathomless.

'Nick o' the Night:

OR,

THE BOY SPY OF '76.

A CENTENNIAL STORY.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

CHAPTER XIV—CONTINUED.

"Good-night, Hugh Latimer!" the man said. "I am an intruder upon the privacy of your sanctum; but I could not keep away. I want those papers in your hand."

With the last words the speaker stepped toward the Tory, who with a cry of amazement shrunk involuntarily toward the hearth.

"Your mission is one of robbery, then," said Hugh Latimer. "These papers in my hand are not valuable to you, they are private property, deeds to an old estate in the mother country. You can't have them!"

"Can't! Do you know who I am?"

"No! I care less."

The Tory was getting bold.

"I've been here before," the visitor said. "Do you not recollect the young corporal who rode with Colonel Holly to this place—the young corporal whom you admitted bore a striking resemblance to your daughter Helen?"

"Ah! I see that you have not forgotten. I am that man! I am Jotham Nettleton!"

"You! Where's your uniform?"

"At the fort. These clothes I'll become a man who has charged with Tarleton into the enemy's ranks. I do not look like the handsomest dragoon in the 41st Royal Horse. I have been through the shadows of death. I rode into Marion's camp. He discovered me, and a squad of his marauders led me to the gallows-tree. But there I showed a little Nettleton muscle. I escaped, but a ball struck me and I fell over a precipice into the most accursed river in South Carolina. Thank God! I did not die. Wounded and almost dead I crawled beneath the bank and swore to live. How I burrowed there, fearing to venture out lest Marion's men should recapture me, I need not tell you. I did not come hither to shock your ears with the narrative of a soldier's suffering. But I want to tell you something; last night I slept in a thicket, and in a tree, at that."

"In a tree?"

"Beneath me were Marion's men, who took possession of the thicket after I had entered. Your daughter was there."

Hugh Latimer stepped forward excitedly.

"Helen?" he cried.

"Yes, Helen. I need not tell you about the conversation that I heard. Hugh Latimer, there is a tattoo on that girl's shoulder—it is a singular device—a crown pierced by an arrow! On my shoulder is the same tattoo. I am Helen's brother!"

The dragoon almost shrieked the last sentence, and before the Tory could draw he found himself in the grip of the excited man.

Jotham Nettleton's eyes flashed fire and his face was livid.

"She is my sister and you are not her father!" he cried, his hot breath almost scorching Hugh Latimer's cheeks.

The Tory's face grew pale, and he tried to wrench himself from the vise-like grip of the dragoon.

"You are the man for whom I have been looking since my landing on these shores," the trooper continued. "Your name is Hugh Latimer here. Was it that in England? Did the people call you Hugh Latimer when the good ship Pict left London? I remember the treachery practiced on board—the storm, the holes bored in the Pict's bottom, the awful scene of shipwreck and death. I was a boy of six then; my sister Helen a babe in her mother's arms. Mother was washed ashore with Helen clasped to her bosom. The babe reached with Helen's hands; the wreckers buried mother. You fled the realm with the charge of crime against you, for, as you know, one of your tools confessed in the hour of death. Those papers are Helen's birthright; they take from you that which you have usurped. Hugh Latimer, Mortimer Holland, murderer! usurper! liar! give me the papers!"

A Bengal tiger seemed to have hold of the Tory. He was shaken by his visitor till his teeth chattered, till his joints seemed rent apart.

"I have found you! When I knew that the crown and the arrow were on Helen's arm, then I knew that you were the man for whom I have been looking. It was to seek you that I enlisted for the American war. My heart is not in the strife. I love freedom; but I want you—*you*!"

The Tory's face was the picture of ghastliness and a picture that Jotham Nettleton seemed to enjoy.

"The papers! quick! There are noises below."

The grip grew tighter on the Tory's body, and he relinquished the documents which he had almost cast upon the fire.

"Good!" said the trooper. "Now for my revenge!"

"What are you going to stain your hands with crime?" gasped Hugh Latimer. "I did not harm your mother. Martha Nettleton died in a storm, and—"

"God sent the storm; but your men sunk the Pict!" cried the trooper.

He fairly hissed the last sentence when with superhuman strength he lifted the Tory from the floor and dashed him against the wall at the foot of which he sunk with a groan.

"There! I hope I've killed you!" grated the avenger. "I have a mind to destroy your accursed dwelling."

The next moment he picked up the lamp and was about to apply its blaze to the papers on the table when he hesitated.

"No!" he said. "This roof has sheltered Helen, and to-night beneath it sleeps one whom she calls sister. I cannot destroy it. I will not deprive her of a shelter. Perhaps," with a glance at his victim, "I have already made her fatherless."

The lamp was restored to the table, and the following minute the library was tenanted by the motionless form of the loyalist.

Jotham Nettleton went down the stairs, and sought the stables. There he saddled and led forth the Tory's favorite horse, which he mounted, and rode away.

After he had departed silence fell on the old house of Azalea.

It was not broken for a long time.

At the end of an hour Hugh Latimer, as we will still call the Tory, moved and sat up. After awhile he managed to reach the table where with trembling hand he traced some words on a bit of yellow paper.

His eyes looked wild and his temple was covered with dark blood.

All at once the quill dropped from his hand, he gave a groan, and a moment later lay across his chair, motionless.

One life was finished. The proudest Tory in South Carolina was dead!

CHAPTER XV.

CAUGHT AT LAST.

With the reader's permission we will carry him back to the house of Colonel Isaac Hayne, where, in the second chapter of our story, we first encountered this devoted patriot.

Colonel Hayne yearned for active life. He was under a parole of honor—a parole forced on him by the British command and set Charleston by the employment of arguments that no man could resist. Hayne became the enemy's prisoner, while his wife and children lay dying with the small-pox, and eager to be at their side, he took the oath of allegiance to the king. He was biding his time. He believed that an expulsion of the royal armies from the district would absolve him, and during the fortnight that followed the battle of Hobkirk's Hill, events had taken a favorable turn for the patriots.

But the argus eyes of the British were on the high-minded partisan, and they waited for a pretext under which they could take his noble life.

Isaac Hayne knew this, but he resolved to follow the dictates of his conscience.

The partisan occupied one of the spacious parlors of his residence one night in the early part of May; but not alone.

A youth, burly and strong, and with clear eyes and a handsome face, stood beside him at the table, on which lay a rough but accurate map of Dorchester and its surroundings.

The hour was quite late, and the heavy shutters, tightly closed, prevented the light in the room from being seen by persons without the house.

"I will lay your plans before Marion," the patriot's young companion said, folding the map. "More; I will urge their adoption. Sumter meets him at dawn in Camp Secret, and to be present I must needs ride away."

"But the girl! Will you take her with you?"

"No. Her presence here is not suspected, and here she is safest. A camp is not a suitable place for a female of her tender years, and I am content to leave her in the care of such a patriot as Isaac Hayne."

The partisan's eyes partook of the pride that glowed on the youth's face; and with heart too full for utterance, he put forth his hand.

"Hark! a voice!"

The next instant the hands parted, and the occupants of the room turned involuntarily toward the door.

A loud knocking quickly followed.

"Your picket!" said the youth, looking up into Hayne's face, which had suddenly grown pale.

"He would not knock for he has a signal that he well knows!" was the hasty reply; and the speaker started toward the corridor that led to the front portals of his home.

The youth—Nick o' the Night—stepped across the parlor, at whose door he paused and listened.

Hayne's face had grown deadly pale by the time that his hand touched the silver knob. He seemed to have a premonition of what was about to come; but he opened the portal like a man brave enough to die.

On the great stone step stood the burly figure of a British dragoon.

"Colonel Hayne!" said the man, executing a faultless military salute.

"Good-night, soldier," was the partisan's reply. "To whom am I indebted for this visit?"

"To a strong detachment of royal cavalry, commanded by Captain McClintock."

"Are you he?"

"N—no," said the soldier.

"Then, sir, I will address your commander," was the haughty reply, that made the trooper bite his lip and turn from the house.

"Captain, he will talk to you, sir," he said, in a strong voice, and the rattling of a sword was followed by the appearance of a young officer, evidently not long out of his teens.

"I am Captain McClintock," he said to Hayne. "Pardon me for permitting a private to call an American worthy to his door; but the fact is, Colonel Hayne, I have heard such terrible stories about the fellow now in your house, that I concluded to be cautious."

Hayne could not but start at the last sentence.

"To whom do you refer, captain?" he asked. "To Nick o' the Night?" was the answer, the tone of which proved that the cautious dragoon was getting bolder. "Do not prevaricate, colonel. We want him, not you; although by harboring him you have trampled on your parole of honor. I have the honor to inform you that your mansion is surrounded by my command, that your picket, the little negro was captured, and that the peaceable surrender of your guest will prevent bloodshed and conflagration. He is here! A donal will but subject you and your house to indignity."

The silence that followed was painful in the extreme.

Nick o' the Night, standing against the lintels of the parlor door, heard every word of the conversation just recorded, and though he could not see Colonel Hayne's face, he felt how pale and ghastly it was.

The flashing of a taper into the hall startled him, and stepping from the door he looked beyond the parlor.

He saw Captain McClintock waiting for a reply to his demand, and a number of British dragoons who faced the house.

All at once he turned and glided down the corridor that ran through the building, thus dividing the lower wings. He reached the rear door, which he opened by means of the key in the lock, and looked out into the night; at first nothing rewarded his action, but dark forms soon became visible between him and the stars, and he heard the low voices of men.

McClintock had spoken the truth! The mansion was surrounded by British soldiers.

The boy's startling discovery was followed by the closing of the door, and as he turned toward the group at the front entrance, he heard the captain's voice.

"Answer me, Colonel Hayne! Shall we have a peaceable surrender, and spare your beautiful home, or must we take your guest by force, and punish you for your stubbornness? I repeat that the boy is here, and we will not depart without him!"

The captain spoke with much spirit, and before the patriot could reply, a figure sprang past him, and alighting on the stone, cried:

"I am here!"

It was Nick o' the Night, and the British officer, with an ejaculation of surprise, started back, and almost fell from the stoop.

"That's the devil!" shouted the dragoon, who, having summoned Hayne to the door, had remained within protecting distance of his superior. "He's the grandest rebel in these parts, and I owe him a blow for the scar on my shoulder."

Nick o' the Night saw the dragoon, whose sword flashed from its scabbard, as he stepped forward, and a pistol leaped from beneath his jacket.

"I'll kill you if you lift your saber!" he said, eying the maddened trooper. "I surrender to Captain McClintock!"

"Yes, he has surrendered, Colby," the young officer said, motioning the saber aside. "My young fellow, you will march forward under the corporal's charge."

With a glance at Hayne, on whose face was a painful expression, Nick o' the Night, who had at last fallen into the hands of his hunters, stepped from the stone.

"Colonel Hayne, we will not molest you," said the officer; "but your conduct must be reported to my superior. I am aware that the most important rebel in these parts has fallen into my hands, and I assure you that I shall carry out, to the last letter, the order lately received in this district from the hands of his lordship."

Hayne gave the captain a look of inquiry, which was almost immediately answered.

"Bring that light nearer," commanded the young officer, and the trooper who held the torch toward the group, while the speaker unfolded a document which he had drawn from his bosom.

Nick o' the Night and the South Carolinian watched the young captain with painful attention, while he read the following order in the glare of the torch:

HEAD-QUARTERS ROYAL ARMY OF THE SOUTH, CAMDEN, APR. 20th, '81.

TO COLONEL KING AND SUBORDINATES:

The troublesome youth termed Nick o' the Night must be shot within fifteen minutes after his capture.

By order of RAWDON.

It was an order characteristic of its author. A grave-like silence followed the reading.

The troopers looked at their young prisoner, eager to note the effect it had produced, and Colonel Hayne gasped like a man suffocating in a volume of smoke.

"That is a cruel order!" the patriot cried, with indignation in his eye. "Lord Rawdon is selling his nobility for the reputation of a murderer. I protest against the carrying out of his infamous decree!"

"No! no!" suddenly cried the boy. "Better people than me have died for liberty before British guns. I regret that I have but one life to give to my country. Colonel Hayne, see these men obey the hated Rawdon, and tell Marion how I died!"

The young officer was abashed at such bravery and bit his lips.

"He is brave," he said, in an undertone, to Hayne; "but I must obey his lordship."

The next moment he turned to his command:

"Execution squad, by the right oblique, march!"

The first twelve troopers that headed the squadron obeyed the command, and halted before the fearless boy!

Hayne shut his eyes and groaned from the depth of the most patriotic bosom in the Palmetto State.

The torch, held aloft behind the executioners, threw a vivid light on Nick o' the Night's face, which betrayed no signs of fear.

A moment intervened between the halt and the unslinging of the deadly carbines.

The young officer looked at his watch. He was a soldier who admired his captive's bravery; but who would not let it step between him and military duty.

All at once he gave the command that

caused twelve carbines to touch as many shoulders.

But the next moment a figure darted from

ing for him, when Helen's hand fell upon his arm.

"Have you any more news?" she asked. "I have been cooped up in this old house for a fortnight, and have heard but little about the war."

"We are gaining ground everywhere," said Marion, with a glow of triumph on his sallow cheeks. "Greene is recovering, Cornwallis is marching to his doom in the north, and God is smiling on the colonies. Dorchester will soon be ours. The crippled bird has left Wingdon Hall."

"What! is Lancaster Wingdon out?" cried Helen.

"Yes. He is hunting for two men!"

"Two men?"

"That boy and a renegade trooper, named Nettleton."

Helen started at mention of the last name.

"Where is the trooper?" she asked.

"I do not know. He slew my father—I mean Hugh Latimer," replied Marion. "Nicholas has doubtless told you about the writing—the last he ever executed—that was found on his table."

"Yes."

"We are hunting for the trooper as well as that one-armed Tory boy. I believe that he carries papers that concern you, Helen. If he meets Lancaster Wingdon one or both will die. If Nicholas and the young Tory have a rencontre blood will flow."

Marion turned almost abruptly from the young girl and stepped to Hayne's side.

Helen was then joined by Nick of the Night, and the twain were engaged in an earnest conversation when a young negro wormed his way through the partisan band, and handed him a note which was sealed with the waxen crest of Wingdon Hall.

The boy started when the sign met his eye, and Helen watched him with intense curiosity as he stepped toward a torch and broke the seal.

The chirography that met his gaze was elegant and feminine in shading, and in the glow of the torch the young partisan read:

"Nicholas Brandon—Bonds! Are we never to meet that we may settle forever the accounts that we owe one another? Like a coward, you fly from before me now that I am strong again. My negro will give you this, and know by its delivery that every night at twelve I wait for you at the double oaks near Wingdon Hall. I dare you to meet me there alone, and in this challenge, I brand you coward! bandit! and murderer! Carolina is too small for you and Lancaster Wingdon."

The reader grieved his teeth when he read the trio of epithets that the challenge contained; but, when the last sentence was mastered, a smile overspread his face.

"That is true, Lancaster Wingdon, that is true!" were the words that rippled over his lips, and folding the paper he returned to Helen.

"I am going away," he said in a tone which did not rouse her suspicions. "The negro's message is important."

He took her hands, and, unseen by the men about them, snatched a hurried kiss from her lips.

"Come!" he said to the sable messenger. "Is he there?"

"He am, massa!" was the reply.

A few moments later the young partisan, mounted on his horse and followed by Whig, the gallant dog, called Marion from his council with Hayne and several trusted lieutenants.

"Good-by, General," said the boy, putting out a hand which Marion took with great surprise. "If I am not in your camp at day-break you will find me beneath the double oaks near Wingdon Hall. Send no one after me, as you value the tried friendship of Nick of the Night."

Marion wrung the boy's hand, and gave him a look that seemed to fathom the secret of his sudden departure.

The next moment the twain had separated, and the young partisan and the Wingdon slave were riding away.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 322.)

TO IRENTIA.

BY SOLITAIRE.

Oh! bright be thy home on that far distant shore,
Where the glad flowers bloom every month in the year;

Where the south winds come whispering the green
Valleys o'er,
And the joy-weeping dew-spirit drops its big tear,
When the day-god shall sing amidst islands of roses,
And moonlight shall shame with its radiance the day.

And the zephyr's soft wing on the light stream reposes,
Think, sweet lady, think on the friend that's away,
Oh! think on the heart that throbbeth for thee alone,
Those songs which we sung (oh, the memory is dear)

By that sweet winding river, 'e'en now the low tone
Of its breathing waves softly, and melts on the ear.

You'll remember, sweet one, when the twilight appears,
And gloriously brilliant the eye-star comes forth,
There are those who are looking through memory's tears,
And watching with thee from the cold, distant north.

Sweet lady, farewell; we may meet nevermore,
But the tear-drop that falls is now telling me
That bright hours of the past shall thy memory come o'er,
And I know Heaven to know I'm remembered by thee.

OLD DAN RACKBACK,
The Great Extarminator;
OR,
THE TRIANGLE'S LAST TRAIL!

BY OLLY COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "HAPPY HARRY," "IDAHO TOM,"
"DAKOTA DAN," "OLD HURRICANE,"
"HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RETROSPECTION.

In order that we may introduce other important characters to our readers without confusion, it becomes necessary that we now go back a few days beyond the time of the last events recorded and narrate the events, incidents and adventures of Idaho Tom and his gallant band of boy-rangers that transpired during their passages through the Black Hills.

With no other outward motive than that begot of the spirit and love of adventure, had Captain Taylor, or as he was better known, Idaho Tom, and his band crossed the mountain and penetrated the Black Hill country. They knew at the time that it was forbidden ground—in other words, the reservation of the Sioux Indians; but, fully acquainted with the habits of the savages, their forbearance and the extent to which violations of the government treaties were usually carried, the rangers resolved to do nothing that would bring them into antagonisms with the red-skins. Before they reached the hills, however, news of the discovery of gold came to their ears; and as a number of them were

experienced miners, they modified their original intention of passing straight through the hills, and concluded to spend a month or so prospecting for gold. Procuring a number of pack animals and a mining outfit they struck out for the most unfrequented parts of the Black Hills. They went into camp in the valley of a little stream tributary to the Powder River. There was plenty of grass here for their animals, game in the vicinity that would furnish them with food, and good prospects for mining.

Although they were far from the Indian stronghold, and in a very rough and desolate part of the hills, they found one or two well-beaten trails, bearing the imprint of hoofed feet, running southward toward the Indian village. All attempts on the part of the rangers to trace these paths to some starting point failed, for all they were very desirous of knowing who their neighbors were, if there were any at all in the neighborhood.

For several days they continued to ramble on foot among the hills, and finally becoming satisfied that they were alone, they began prospecting for gold.

Dividing up into three parties, they scattered out in different directions through the hills, returning to camp at evening to report the success of the day's work.

On the evening of the third day, as Idaho Tom, Darcy Cooper and Sam Walton were returning to camp, their attention was drawn aside by sight of a light blue smoke curling up from among the hills and tree-tops some distance from their right. They had never noticed it there before, and so their curiosity became aroused. Idaho Tom gave his tools to Walton and Cooper, and sending them on to camp, he struck out across the country to make some inquiry regarding the smoke. His way lay over a series of rough, broken hills, deep-wooded valleys and yawning chasms and pitfalls. And as it was nearly night, the young miner was compelled to pick his way with extreme caution.

In the course of an hour he arrived in the immediate vicinity of the smoke, which he could still see lazily curling into the air above the tree-tops. That it rose from a camp-fire in the valley he had not a doubt; and so he began to pick his way down the almost perpendicular face of the cliff overhanging the vale.

Arrived safely below, what was his surprise to find no signs of a fire there. He glanced up and down the valley but could see nothing; and so he became somewhat puzzled. The valley was only about four rods wide, and guarded on each side by high bluffs, from whose face sharp ledges of rock were thrust out, here and there, above and below, the tree-tops. Huge pines, with heavy tops, shot heavenward from the valley in whose soil centuries had rooted them. Their tops were so interlaced that not a patch of sky could be seen through the dense canopy. From the projecting ledges one could have walked out upon the tree-tops.

A sort of a foreboding silence pervaded the place.

A subdued light enabled Tom to discern the surrounding objects indistinctly.

He glanced carefully around upon all sides. He searched the bluffs towering above him with a keen eye; but as he could hear nor see any signs of life, he turned his face toward camp in no little disappointment.

The shadows of evening had long since begun to gather in this narrow, mountain defile, and as night was close at hand, Tom saw the necessity of hurrying along, and so moved away as rapidly as possible.

Suddenly a full score of mounted men swept around a bend in the valley into plain view.

Tom stopped and started back in surprise and fear. His first thoughts, when he saw they were white men, was, that they were a band of prairie freebooters, and he was about to seek safety in flight, when, upon a second glance, he discovered that the horsemen were a party of United States troops, the foremost of whom were the uniform of a major of cavalry.

Idaho Tom stood his ground without the least fear, and as the horsemen drew up before him, he saluted them by touching his hat.

"Well, whom have we found here?" demanded the major, eying Tom from head to foot as though he were some contemptible creature scarcely worthy of inspection.

"My name, sir," replied Tom, politely, "is Thomas Taylor."

"And what are you doing here, Thomas Taylor?" the officer asked, his tone tinged with sarcasm.

"Having a bit of sport," responded Tom, with a confused smile.

"Do you know, sir, that you have no business here on this reservation—that you are trespassing?" asked the major, with a martial air, and a display of self-arrogance.

"I'm doing nothing objectionable to the Indians."

"Sir, that is not the question—the idea at all. Orders have been issued, sir, to arrest every man found within the limits of this reservation and march him off, especially if he has no business here. And, sir, by the authority vested in me, I shall be under the necessity of escorting you to the head-quarters of General Custer."

"Indeed!" replied Tom, somewhat puzzled over his dilemma; "this is something I had hardly expected; and if you will allow me to go on, I will promise to quit these hills with all possible speed."

"I can, and will do no such thing, sir. My duty is imperative; moreover, I have no assurance you would keep your word."

"What do you take me for, major?" Tom asked, a slight flush mounting to his handsome face that appeared directly to the soldier's admiration.

Stung to the quick by Tom's reply, the major retorted:

"Sir, I take you for an insolent puppy; and I desire you to understand that no further impertinence will be tolerated, and turning to two of his men, ordered them to take Tom into custody and march him along in rear of the command."

As there was no alternative but to obey, Tom was taken in charge by the two cavalrymen, when the party moved on slowly up the pass.

Tom did not become disheartened, for he had high hopes of effecting a compromise with the commandant. At least, he resolved to make the attempt before he ever hinted one word of having friends near. But in case he could arrange no terms of compromise, he would be compelled to tell the whole facts connected with his party being there. His principal object in this was to prevent a collision between his followers and the soldiers, which he knew would be the result, should they discover him a prisoner in the soldiers' camp. He knew the reckless daring of his men, and that they would no more hesitate in attacking a party of soldiers than a band of savages. The soldiers were in the majority, he knew; but his boys had been trained in the school of the mountain, and being well armed with repeating rifles, a desperate conflict was sure to be the result of a collision.

This done, she advanced to the spot where she first touched earth, and, kissing the tips of

Tom learned from his escort that the party

was a detachment of General Custer's command, then encamped some distance north. While rumors of the finding of gold in the hills had reached his ears, Tom never knew, until now, that an exploring party under direction of the government was in the country, else he would have been more careful. As it was, however, he resolved to make the best of a bad situation.

His captors moved on but a short distance up the valley and went into camp for the night; which fact gave him no little relief. But when the major ordered him bound and secured to a tree, his emotions assumed a bitter and indignant character; but, curbing them the best he could, he submitted, with apparent grace, to his fate, however humiliating it might be.

Guards were posted above and below the camp. A fire was kindled in the center of the defile, and soon its glow lit up the surrounding darkness.

The soldiers made their supper off cold rations; then heaping armloads of fuel on the fire, they sat down around it to recount the day's journey and adventure. Thus they spent an hour or two; finally they began to drop off, one by one, to rest. The earth was a bed, the hollow of their saddles a pillow, and their blankets and the dense canopy of pine boughs their only covering.

The commandant, and one or two scientific gentlemen, were finally the only ones that remained up. They seated themselves together and engaged in examining a map, making notes of the day's explorations, and selecting a route for the morrow.

Meanwhile, Idaho Tom had been given a blanket, and his bonds lengthened so that he could lie down at pleasure. He wrapped the blanket around his shoulders, and seating himself upon the ground, leaned against the tree to which he was bound. Closing his eyes, he engaged in mental reflection. He had made no attempt to secure his release. He resolved to wait until the major was not only at leisure, but alone. He concluded that if there were no one to witness the man's authority and imperious dignity, he might engage him in a friendly conversation, and thereby effect some terms of conciliation. While waiting for this opportunity, he fell into a gentle doze, from which he awoke with a sudden start. His eyes were turned upward, and in the dim glow of the subdued light an apparition unfolded itself to his view—an apparition that bound him speechless with horror to the spot.

It was the form of a woman—a young and lovely girl robed in white, standing indistinctly outlined in the dusky shadows above. She stood in mid-air with no visible means of support; and with a white finger, upon which flashed a hoop of gold, pressed upon her lips, floated upward into the overhanging shadows of night.

Tom had obtained but a mere glimpse of this mysterious form, and his mind had received such a sudden shock by sight of it, that for a minute he believed he was still dreaming as he had been before he awoke. Again and again he reassured himself that it was but the vagaries of an excited mind. But in spite of his efforts to the contrary, the truth would force itself upon him, and at length that strange feeling which a mystery engenders, took possession of his mind.

When the commandant arose and started to his tent, the young ranger was so confused that he let slip the opportunity for which he had been waiting so long, to speak to the officer. Then followed the uncomfortable assurance of being alone, in one sense of the word, with the mystery of the apparition weighing upon both body and mind.

Finally a corporal of the guard went out with relief, and the others came in, replenished the fire, dried the dampness that had accumulated on their clothing from the heavy mist, and then wrapped themselves in their blankets and laid down to rest.

Again all were soon asleep, and Tom alone kept his wakeful watch over the camp-fire. As the moments wore away, however, his thoughts grew sluggish and his mind confused. The monotonous roar and crackle of the fire; the labored respirations of the tired and worn soldiers now fast asleep; the tinkle of the rings on the animals tethered near; the ghostly flicker of the quivering, dancing light; the ogish forms and faces that an excited brain conjures up in the writhing, twisting flames—all conspired to draw the veil of unconsciousness over him, and fill his breast with a vague foreboding. He tried to fight off the powerful influence of sleep. The struggle was a hard one. Body and brain courted its advance, but the will rebelled. The contest lasted for nearly an hour, and it seemed as though the former would gain the victory. Heavy weights seemed pressing down upon his eyelids and his brain throbbed. Tom would have given anything in the world for an hour's sleep; but under the circumstances he felt as though it would be death to give them.

Determined to fight the seductive power to the last, he rose to his feet and began pacing to and fro the length of his bonds.

The fire burned lower and lower. Only the sickly glare of the red coals now lit up the surrounding view. The rocky bluffs on either side of the pass frowned down upon him grim and threatening. The stately pines, with mossy trunks, rose upward like slender gray columns to support the mighty dome of night. Up and down the valley the darkness stretched away into infinity.

A sound like that of a human voice suddenly reaches Tom's ears.

He mechanically raises his eyes. He starts back with a low exclamation, for out of the blackness of heaven he sees again that angelic apparition descending to earth. Still robed in white it is still upon the lips is pressed a snowy finger!

"Is it an angel?" Tom asked himself.

He could see that she was young—not over eighteen. Her form was graceful and sylph-like, and clothed in a plain, spotless robe of white over which fell a wealth of black, silky hair. Her face seemed as white as the robe she wore in the dim twilight. It possessed a wild, imperious look. Dark eyes, radiant with celestial love, looked from out her white face upon the prisoner, filling his soul with a strange, speechless silence.

Mute as a statue of surprise, Idaho Tom stands watching the lovely vision descending to earth. In the fingers of one hand he sees a small, glittering knife resembling the blade of a stiletto, but it gives him no fear.

Down and down, slowly, and without any apparent volition whatever, she descended upon the air until finally she touched the earth. Then with a quick glance around her that seemed more human-like, she advanced to the side of Idaho Tom and deliberately cut his bonds.

"Flee, sir," she then said, a look of benignity beaming on her wondrous face, "flee—up the steep bluff there. Go, for my sake, and may the Holy Mother guide and protect you."

Then, to his surprise, she cut the sign of the cross upon his breast with her finger, and upon his back, also.

This done, she advanced to the spot where she first touched earth, and, kissing the tips of

her little fingers to Tom, rose aloft in the air—up out of sight in the blackness of night.

Starting, as if from a terrible nightmare, Idaho Tom glanced wildly around him, then turning, glided out of the camp—up the hillside and away into freedom.

And still the soldiers slept on.

CHAPTER XV.

"LOOK OUT!"

SLOWLY through the lonely hills Idaho Tom made his way.

The branches of the pine above him swayed in the night-breeze; a wolf howled in the distance, the rugged bluffs and treacherous ground, but what he was familiar with.

All was dark and dismal as eternity, and the young miner could make his way onward only at the risk of breaking his neck. He had been schooled in the mountains, however, and there were no dangers possessed by the deep canons, the rugged bluffs and treacherous ground, but what he was familiar with.

Now and then, as he moved along, he picked up a small stone and tossed it ahead of him, and by the sound it produced he was enabled to judge of what was before him. If it rolled back at his feet he knew an acclivity was before him, but when it went clapping away, the sound growing fainter and fainter, it told that a yawning chasm disputed his advance.

Tom shaped his course in the direction that he supposed would lead him to his camp; and with no other thought than that he would ultimately reach it, he moved on, dreaming of the beautiful apparition that had come from the clouds to his release. Many were his speculations regarding her, the place of her abode, and the power she possessed. In fact he dwelt upon the matter so long, to the exclusion of other thoughts, that it suddenly occurred to him he had lost his course among the hills and valleys.

A dense mist obscured the sky and blotted out the moon and stars, and so there was nothing visible by which he might set himself aright; there was but a single course open to him by sound. Of this he resolved to avail himself, and at once placed his thumb and forefinger inside of his lips and blew a sharp, piercing whistle that cut through the air in far-off echoes. He repeated it a number of times, then in answer finally came the prolonged twang of a horn. He recognized it as his own by its peculiar tone, and with a lighter heart he bent his footsteps in the direction of the response.

Ever and anon he repeated his whistle and clear and distinct answered him.

Some distance before him the dim reflection of a light was seen, and as the hills and hollows over which he was now passing had assumed an air of familiarity he felt assured that the light shone from his own camp.

He hurried on and soon came within view of the fire itself, and his heart gave a bound of joy and delight when he recognized a number of the familiar forms and faces of his own followers standing around it. He quickened his footsteps almost to a run, and when about two hundred yards from camp a voice demanded:

"Who goes there? You, Tom?"

"Ay, Darcy Cooper," responded the young miner, advancing toward his friend; "but what are you doing here?"

"Hunting you, Tom; where have you been?"

"Having a bit of lively adventure," was the reply.

"A party of soldiers under one Major Brakke are encamped over here in the pass; and, as they happened to meet me, the gallant major found it his duty to take me into custody, and halter me up to a tree, as you would a festive mule with a frisky heel, and left me there to brood over my situation. But, Darcy, what do you think? I, Tom Taylor, like John the Baptist, saw an angel descend from out the darkness in a robe of white and a halo of mist. A look of mercy was upon her lovely face, and what should that celestial creature do but approach me, cut my bonds and bid me go—and for her sake."

"You are romancing now, Thomas," replied Darcy.

"I will swear by the sun, moon and stars to what I say; and, what is more, the angel must have been one of the good disciples of Loyola, for, after invoking the protection of the Holy Mother, she not only made the sign of the cross on my breast, but upon my back, also," and as Tom concluded he laughed merrily over the whole strange affair.

"By heavens!" exclaimed young Cooper, having obtained a glimpse of Tom's back, "I believe you now, Tom; and that her touch must have been one of fire, for there is a blazing cross this holy minute on your back!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Tom.

"There is a glowing cross of fire on your back," repeated Darcy; "pugh! it smells like brimstone or phosphorus—it is a cross made of phosphoreted ether. Tom, are you sure you are not mistaken as to the nature and nationality of your angel? Are you sure she came down? I tell you, boy, you smell of the Inferno. I'm afraid you, Tom Taylor, unlike John the Baptist, are mistaken in your angel."

Tom took off his hunting-jacket, and, true enough, found a glowing cross upon the back of it.

"By the royal society!" he exclaimed, "that girl, whoever or whatever she may be, has been practicing some deception on me—confound her pretty, angelic picture!"

Darcy Cooper could not restrain an outburst of laughter at his young friend's annoyance and surprise. He saw that Tom had been in solemn earnest about his lovely visitor from the realms above.

"I shouldn't wonder, Tom," he finally said, "if you heard from her soon again."

"Yes; I darsay this was put here by her in order to guide her, or her friends, to our retreat; and, as it was done secretly, it could have been done with no good intention, I am afraid."

"Plague take such angels, Tom; they're a nuisance to the country."

"I tell you, Darcy, that girl's appearance was attended with no little mystery. She was dressed in a loose, white robe, and did descend from the darkness above, without a single movement of the hand or body. She actually seemed to float down upon the air by no other power than the volition of her own will. Of course, if she was mortal, as I am now strongly inclined to think she is, her descent and ascent were made by some material, yet invisible, means."

"Most assuredly, Tom—but there goes your horn at camp. The boys are very uneasy about you, and for fear the continued blasts may bring those soldiers down upon us we had better hurry in."

They moved on and entered camp, where Tom's arrival was hailed with shouts of joy.

"Where have you been, captain? where have you been?" were the questions that passed from lip to lip.

"Tom's been out among the angels," said Darcy Cooper, a smile of mischief lighting up his face, "and one of them streaked him with brimstone."

In explanation of Darcy's assertion, Tom was compelled to enter into a detailed account of his absence, concluding by taking them into

the darkness and showing the cross upon his back.

After the subject had been fully discussed, there for some purpose or other, that could be of no good to them; and, through fear of danger, one of the party suggested that they change the position of their camp immediately. Before the others could pass an opinion on the matter, the tramp of feet was heard, and the next moment the darkness gave birth to a dozen or more grim forms—the forms of men who stalked boldly into camp with a revolver in each hand, and confronted the young miners.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 324.)

THANKS "FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE HEART."

WELLINGTON, LOUISA CO., O., Aug. 24, 1874.

Dr. R. V. PIERCE, Buffalo, N. Y.

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THE GHOST OF MUSIC.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

He was a very pensive chap
With hair exceeding long.
He bought a two-dollar and a half accordion, and
went to blowing it strong.

With heroism misapplied
He pumped and fingered the keys,
And the music which he jerked out of it seemed to
imply a lack of harmony and grease.

That the instrument had lost some notes
Was plainly understood.
But unfortunately there wasn't enough of them
gone to do it any good.

We heard it every living hour,
And in the hours between,
And a very debilitating cold in its nose had that
machine.

We wondered if his nervous power
Such playing did not tax,
And asked him if he wouldn't kindly let us help him
to play on it with an ax.

We told him Bergh would come around
As soon as he should learn
How he was knocking all the breath out of that in-
strument's body, and he answered, "You be
dern."

And day and night his pensive soul
On music's wings did soar.
Till in the course of six months it began to look like
it might eventually become a bore.

The soul of Thomasson rose in us,
And so one day at noon
We gave that accordion a broken dose of dynamite
for the purpose of raising the tune.

When he returned he picked it up,
But that was the last time.
There came a crash, and there wasn't enough of
that young chap found on which to make a
rhyme.

The coroner's jury sat on his hat,
Their verdict—"It appears
This young man's gone with his accordion to join
in the Music of the Spheres."

The Men of '76.

MONTGOMERY,
The Chivalrous Soldier.

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

In Richard Montgomery we have a truly
knightly character—brave, generous and just.
He asked no man to go where he would not
lead. He deferred to authority and cheerfully
sacrificed comfort, happiness and personal wishes
to the demands of duty. He was patriotic
from love of liberty and the rights of man.
He was, as a soldier, ardent, quick to act and
persevering even in the direst situations. As a
leader he was prudent, wise and reliant. In
many respects like Wolfe, his once-beloved
leader, the Fates seem to have drawn both to
the same field for their martyrdom—precious
offerings on the altar of glory.

Richard Montgomery was of Irish parentage.
Born in the north of Ireland, A. D. 1736, his
tastes and temperament led him to the profes-
sion of arms. At the early age of eighteen he
entered the British army and was assigned to
service in America. He was present at the
second siege of Louisbourg, Cape Breton Island,
(July 1758), where his gallant conduct won him a
lieutenancy. He served in Amherst's army,
operating on Lake Champlain against the pow-
erful French forts, and thus obtained a local
knowledge of the region wherein, at a later
day, he was to act in a leader's capacity. The
conquest of Canada having been secured to the
British arms, the seat of war with France drifted
to the West India islands, where the two
great powers met in magnificent combat—the
prize being the superbly-fruited island of Mar-
tinique. In that grand naval and land assault
[see our sketch of Gates] Montgomery partici-
pated and won for himself a captaincy. In
the British service promotion is chiefly by pur-
chase of commissions; hence, its army swarms
with the sons of noblemen and gentlemen of
means. For a soldier to mount on an en-
sign's to a captaincy, by service alone, is a
mark of exceptional merit. Such was Mont-
gomery's mode of advancement.

After the peace between France and Great
Britain (1763) Montgomery returned to Eng-
land and remained nine years, on leave of ab-
sence, still retaining his commission in the
British army, but in 1772 he resigned that com-
mission to come to America and participate in
what his clear vision must have perceived was
a coming struggle for nationality.

His record as a soldier, his courtly bearing,
his fine intelligence, won for him a warm re-
ception, and he soon made permanent his in-
terest in American affairs, espousing the daugh-
ter of Judge Robert R. Livingston. Then he
retired to a farm in Dutchess county, on the
banks of the Hudson, to enjoy the sweets of a
tranquil life.

But, the spirit of discontent became the mon-
itor of alarm; the long-gathering outburst
came: the blow that fell at Lexington and Con-
cord was the signal for every patriotic heart to
assert its majesty. The call reached Montgom-
ery in his just-dawning home life. He was
elected to represent his county in the Provin-
cial Assembly.

Colden, the British Lieutenant-Governor, still
maintained the semblance of authority, but the
people's representatives were masters. A Com-
mittee of One Hundred, comprised of the best
citizens of New York City, was organized as a
Committee of Safety. It was composed of pa-
triot and recognized royalists alike, for, not for
a year after the battle of Bunker Hill, did the
great mass of people really hope for and talk
of independence; the fight, for the first year,
was a mere rebellion against unjust taxation.
Not until June 7th, 1776, was the subject of
independence formally considered in the Con-
tinental Congress. Henry Lee, of Virginia, then
introduced a resolution, declaring that "The
United Colonies are and ought to be free and
independent States—that they are absolved
from all allegiance to the British crown, and
that their political connection with Great Brit-
ain is and ought to be totally dissolved."

This was treason, under English law—the
"overt act" that would, if the rebellion failed,
consign every open advocate of it to the gal-
lows. But, the Colonies were prepared for
that final step. A year's war had educated
both people and representatives to the "overt
act." Resistance to an unjust imposition of
taxes had drawn armies together; had organ-
ized all the Colonies in a "Common Cause," had
encouraged distaste for British rule and a for-
eign authority; and when Tom Paine burst out
in Philadelphia, in April, 1776, with his pam-
phlet called "Common Sense," the public heart
so responded that Congress had to act. Lee's
resolution was debated with closed doors, with
every injunction to secrecy, and the immortal
Declaration of Independence was the result.

Montgomery was, even then early in the
struggle, sleeping in a warrior's grave on the
bloody Heights of Abraham!

Montgomery was appointed by the Continen-
tal Congress, a brigadier-general, in June, 1775.
He wrote: "The Congress having done me the
honor of electing me a brigadier-general in
their service, is an event which must put an

end, for awhile—perhaps forever—to the quiet
scheme of life I had prescribed for myself; for,
though entirely unexpected and undesired by
me, the will of an oppressed people, compelled
to choose between liberty and slavery, must be
obeyed." The keynote to actions that led
him to martyrdom!

"At the time of receiving his commission,"
says Irving, "Montgomery was about thirty-
nine years of age and the beau ideal of a sol-
dier. His form was well proportioned and
vigorous; his countenance expressive and pre-
possessing; he was cool and discriminating in
council, energetic and fearless in action. His
principles commanded the respect of friends
and foes, and he was noted for winning the af-
fections of the soldiery."

The capture of Ticonderoga and Crown
Point [see sketches of Ethan Allen and Arnold]
made both Allen and Arnold eager for an im-
mediate invasion of Canada before it could be
strengthened by troops from Great Britain.
Both men urged the matter on the several
northern Colonial assemblies and on the Con-
tinental Congress. Washington, at an early
stage of the contest, recognized the desirabil-
ity of having Canada join in the revolution,
and now, seeing the danger of a descent of
British and Indians from the north, if Mont-
real and Quebec were not secured, entered into
the scheme of invasion or, rather, as it was
understood, of co-operation with the ele-
ments in Canada favorable to the cause of the
Colonies. Congress assented, and authorized
General Schuyler to assume command of the
enterprise. Proceeding to Lake Champlain, he
thence sent out emissaries into Canada, who all
reported favorably to a "rising" upon the ap-
pearance of the American forces. A deputa-
tion of Canadian chiefs visited Washington at
the Cambridge camp, in August (1775) to offer
their co-operation in securing Canada against
the British, and then revealed the fact that the
British commander in Canada, Sir Guy Carle-
ton, was striving to enlist all the savages for a
movement on the border settlements and the
forts on Champlain. This determined Wash-
ington to hasten matters; so Schuyler was en-
couraged to push forward into Canada, from
Ticonderoga, where about two thousand troops
were gathered for the expedition. At the same
time, as a diversion, to keep Sir Guy from
precipitating all his power against Schuyler's
column in its advance by way of the Sorrel
river against Montreal, Washington conceived
the idea of a separate column, to advance up
the Kennebec river and thence through the
Maine forests against Quebec; and so commu-
nicated with Schuyler, then at Albany (holding a
council with the chiefs of the celebrated tribes
of the Six Nations, whose neutrality in the im-
pending war he was aiming to secure, but
whom the British were trying, by every device
and authority, to precipitate on the New York
and New Hampshire settlements).

Washington's scheme of a stroke at Quebec
met with Schuyler's hearty approval. He there-
fore arranged to move down the Sorrel river,
against the British post at St. John, at once,
while Washington rapidly prepared to dispatch
Arnold with 1,200 men against Quebec.

Montgomery was then in command at Ticon-
deroga, having been assigned, by the War Com-
mittee in Congress, to the Canada expedition, as
next in authority to Schuyler. Acting with
ready promptness, Montgomery, during July,
had been watching Carleton's operations in pre-
paring a flotilla on the Sorrel, and had resolved
to occupy the Isle aux Noix, which commands
the entrance of the Sorrel river to Lake Cham-
plain, just before receiving the order from Al-
bany to advance against St. John. Schuyler
arrived at Ticonderoga on the night of August
30th (1775), to find Montgomery already gone.
He pushed on, in an open boat, the next day,
and, overtaking the expedition, occupied the
Isle aux Noix September 4th. September 13th
Arnold set out on his advance, from Cambridge.
Considering the ill condition of all means of
communication, the want of proper appliances for
the march, camp and field services, this rapidity
of organization and movement shows the spirit
of '76 in a most soldierly light.

Allen, having been rejected as an officer by
the newly enlisted regiment of Green Moun-
tain Boys—which chose Seth Warner for its
lieutenant-colonel—proceeded to Ticonderoga
and enlisted as a volunteer, under Schuyler.
He was dispatched, along with Major Brown,
as an emissary to stir up the Canadians (see
sketch of Allen), and Schuyler moved against
St. John; but finding the place too strongly
fortified, returned to Isle aux Noix to await re-
inforcements and proper guns from below.
These coming forward, and Allen having re-
ported the people as quite generally favorable
to the invader's cause, a second advance was
ordered, but, at the last moment, Schuyler's
health gave out wholly, and while he returned
by boat to Ticonderoga, Montgomery went for-
ward—now in sole command of that most ad-
venturous and important expedition.

The siege of St. John followed, but with
most ill-equipped material both of guns and
men. The latter were exceedingly insubordi-
nate, intolerant of command, and indifferent to
discipline—a mob of brave, restless dare-devils,
who, enlisted for a brief term of service, made
light of order, and trifled with duty to an ex-
tent that filled the heart of their commander
with dismayed disgust. To attempt to do his
heavy work with such a force seemed like
courting defeat.

To add to his troubles, Ethan Allen made a
dash upon Montreal, "upon his own hook," and
was caught in a trap which, if it did not tame
his rash spirit, effectually disposed of his per-
son for many a month. His adventure, wholly
without orders, was simply characteristic of the
independence which gave Montgomery so much
concern.

Allen's capture induced Sir Guy Carleton to
make a dash upon Montgomery, but he was
soundly whipped by Seth Warner's Green
Mountain Boys and Capt. Lamb's New York
battery before he reached the besieging forces.
An attempt by the Highlanders, under Col.
McLean, to go up the Sorrel to co-operate with
Carleton, resulted in his repulse by Major
Brown, and his return to Quebec. Chamberlain,
an inferior post, five miles below St. John, had
been taken by Majors Brown and Livingston,
Oct. 13th. This gave Montgomery much need-
ed ammunition and stores, and put new vigor
in the siege. When the disasters to Carleton
and McLean were communicated to Major
Preston, defending St. John, he capitulated
(Nov. 8d), with five hundred British regulars
and one hundred Canadian volunteers. Excel-
lent war material was thus secured, and the
way opened to Montreal.

Before that city Montgomery appeared, Nov.
12th, but Carleton had escaped down stream,
the previous night, with all his troops and guns,
much to Montgomery's disappointment, since it
placed Arnold's corps—which had, on Nov. 9th,
*It was, in fact, the source of deepest anxiety to
Washington himself. It took more than one year
in the ranks to make the independent citizen the
obedient soldier. Not until the brave, politic and
admirable Baron Steuben came to Valley Forge, and
there gave up of what discipline and obedience
could do, did the Continental army develop reg-
iments of troops worthy of any field.

after incredible hardships, made its appearance
at Point Levi, on the St. Lawrence, opposite
Quebec—in great danger. Montreal capitulated
upon demand. The Americans were cheer-
fully received by all classes, and nothing re-
mained but to change the new order of things,
then to push on for a junction with Arnold for
the assault on Quebec. Carleton, caught by
the American batteries at the mouth of the
river Sorrel, was not able to pass down to Que-
bec, with his flotilla, and Montgomery now
aimed to capture the knight and all his force.
The capture was effected, but Carleton, in dis-
guise, rowed by six Canadians, escaped down
stream, and eventually made his way to Que-
bec. Montgomery secured Major-General Pres-
cott, the late commander in Montreal, who had
so brutally misused Ethan Allen a few weeks
before.

When the movement on Quebec was ordered,
to Montgomery's astonishment the great ma-
jority of the forces refused to go further. They
argued—let Arnold do his own work. This in-
subordination caused Montgomery to resign—
an act which brought many of the men and of-
ficers to a sense of the injury they were doing
the service, and the day after his resignation,
such apologies and explanations were given as
impelled the commander to resume his efforts
for an advance. But considerable numbers of
the New England troops, despite all orders, did
go home—three hundred in one body—all af-
fected, as Schuyler wrote, with a desperate
home sickness.

To dwell on the distressing annoyances, hin-
drances and disappointments which confronted
Montgomery at every step, and which Schuy-
ler, at Ticonderoga, was wholly unable, at that
late and inclement season of the year, to pre-
vent, is needless. It all forms only one of many
unhappy chapters in the history of that war,
fought under such terrible disadvantages. Even
Schuyler himself was driven to give notice of
his own proposed resignation.

With a mere skeleton force (about three hun-
dred men), Montgomery joined Arnold, Dec.
4th—assuming general command. The garri-
son of Quebec was defiant. Carleton and Mc-
Lean were insolent. The American flags of
truce were scorned. All efforts to reach the
citizens of the town, to obtain their co-opera-
tion, were futile. Arnold's failure, in his first
operations [see sketch of Arnold] had rendered
the enemy confident. A siege was therefore
necessary. A siege by a force not exceeding
nine hundred effective men, ill equipped in ev-
ery respect! It was a mere pretense, of course,
for nothing else remained. Guns were mount-
ed and did some destruction to the town, but
not to the powerful fortifications. Then Mont-
gomery resolved, as the year closed the term of
enlistment of the men, to attempt to carry the
place by storm. This attempt was made at
two o'clock in the morning of Dec. 31st, at odds
which would have sickened other hearts than
those of the two leaders, and of such spirits as
Dan Morgan, whose exploits on that terrible
day we have recorded. The brave Montgom-
ery led the storming party along the river
shore, doubling Cape Diamond, to strike the
lower town—a way at all times dangerous, but
treacherously so then, when snow and ice cumbered
the narrow passage. He was with the pioneers;
the first barrier was surprised and won, after a brief
struggle. Then he rushed on, at a battery, follow-
ed by his three hundred men, coming forward on
the run. A single gun flashed from the battery,
and a winnow of death followed. Montgomery
and one of his aids were killed almost instan-
taneously. Disorder ensued. Col. Campbell, dismay-
ed by the terrible loss, ordered a retreat. An
advance would have been to victory. The
dead were left behind. Relieved of attack in
that quarter, Carleton turned all his forces on
the dauntless Dan Morgan, who had fought his
way into the town. The death of Montgomery
and the wounding of Arnold was followed by
Morgan's capture.

That ended one of the most daring enter-
prises in the history of modern war. The body
of the dead General was given honorable burial,
by a foe who knew how to admire valor. How
Arnold deported himself, under wounds and
defeat, we have written. All that hard, des-
perate campaign is luminous with glory for the
name that was destined to be darkened forever
with infamy. If, like Montgomery, he could
have perished then, how precious would now
be his memory!

Montgomery's remains were removed to St.
Paul's church, New York city, by order of the
State of New York, and deposited, July 8th,
1818, beneath the monument erected by Con-
gress, amid most imposing ceremonies. This
monument, in the face of the Broadway front
of St. Paul's, beneath the portico, is inscribed
as follows:

"This monument is erected by the order of Con-
gress, 25th January, 1776, to transmit to posterity a
grateful remembrance of the patriotism, conduct,
enterprise and perseverance of the patriot, commander,
and soldier, RICHARD MONTGOMERY,
who, after a series of successes amidst the most
discouraging difficulties, fell in the attack on Que-
bec 31st Dec., 1775. Aged 37 years."

A Woman's Guilt.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

ELLIS TREMAYNE laid his fork down with a
gesture half of impatience, half of discourag-
ement, and a frown that had no business on the
forehead of a six months' married man, the hus-
band of the prettiest woman that promenade
Broadway, corrugated his handsome white fore-
head.

"You seem to have not the smallest appre-
ciation of affairs, Effie. I have explained time
and again that I am living square up to my in-
come—not saving a penny—and yet you still
persist in demanding money for every trifle
that takes your fancy."

Ellis Tremayne spoke more decisively than
Effie had ever heard him, and she mentally
vowed him "horridly cross," and parted her
red lips and leaned back in her chair with a
very aggrieved look on her lovely face.

And it was lovely—Mr. Tremayne thought
so that same moment, as he looked at the deli-
cate pink-and-snow complexion, and the large
dark-blue eyes that had played such mad havoc
with his heart a year ago—at the full, exquisite
line that had only seemed made for smiles and
kisses then, that now were rapidly consummat-
ing their task of discovering the clay feet of
his idol—that now were parting to utter
words he knew were coming, that did come.

"You are just as mean and cross as can be!
What's the use of living at all, if you can't have
what you want—if you can't have things like
other people? I tell you I do think you might
let me have some money this morning. I need
it most awfully."

Her blue eyes certainly looked pleading
enough to give entire credence to her assertions.

"I almost am tempted to say that cannot be
true, Effie, since it was only a week ago to-day
I handed you a hundred dollars—a sum amply
sufficient for even the most inexperienced fin-
ancier on which to run a family of two."

Darker frowns were gathering on Tremayne's
forehead, but Effie only sneered.

"A hundred dollars! You speak as if it were
a fortune. I tell you, Ellis, I must have things
like—like other people. How on earth do you
suppose I feel when Mrs. Coddington or Miss
Belleburn calls for me to drive, wearing their
elegant carriage costumes, and I in the same
dress I appear in on the street or at church?"

Tremayne smiled contemptuously.
"So you hope to rival the wife of a million-
aire, and the only daughter of a wealthy bank-
er, do you? You, the wife of the cashier at
Wingfield and Sons, on three thousand a year!
Effie—have nothing to do with women who are,
unconsciously, perhaps, sowing seeds of discon-
tent and extravagance in your heart."

"I am neither discontented nor extravagant,
Ellis—you shall not say so. But I must have
some money to get a new suit. Oh! Ellis, have
a heavenly shade of prune, and you know I can
wear so well one particular shade, just the
very one I saw at Stewart's. Honestly, I
haven't a dress to wear to Judge Lamar's re-
ception."

Ellis ate his egg with very little show of sat-
isfaction, and his silence, while bitter thoughts
were rushing through his mind, was taken by
Effie as signs of consent; and she was not slow
in pressing her advantage.

"It won't cost over a hundred dollars, Ellis—
very reasonable, indeed, for I shall make it
nearly all myself, and I am sure you can't be
displeased at that. Then say yes, won't you,
Ellis, dear?"

A settled, white look came around his hand-
some mouth.

"If you care more for show and fine
clothes than for my respect and the conscious-
ness that you are an economical, prudent wife
who is helping her husband save instead of
most goading him into debt—you can have the
money."

Her eyes flashed as delightedly as a child's
over a new toy. She had accomplished her de-
sire, and his cold, yet touching, words had fall-
en unheeded before that "you can have the
money."

She sprang from her chair behind the coffee-
urn, and threw her arms around his neck, kiss-
ing his worried, handsome forehead.

"You darling! I knew you would not say
no, for all you read me such a lecture on econ-
omy. Really, Ellis, when you see how lovely
I shall look in my new silk, you will not grudge
the money, will you? You like to see me look
as pretty as I used before we were married,
don't you? And you're not angry, dear? You
do love me!"

Her sweet, girlish face all alight with happy
enthusiasm, her blue eyes dancing with such
honest delight, her smooth cheek lying against
his, and her dainty little hand stroking his
whiskers—of course Ellis laid down his napkin
and pushed back from the table, and kissed her.

She was his wife—sweet, pretty, delicate as
a mountain-pink, and he loved her; loved her
dearly, truly as in the days when he had won
her thinking what a rare flower she was.

He loved her, and was willing, yes, anxious,
to increase her happiness by every honest
means in his power—only, Effie was extrava-
gant and unreasonable in her demand for dress
and style that was beyond the capabilities of
even the well-salaried man he was.

So now he kissed her tenderly, and then took
out his wallet and laid a crisp greenback on the
table-cloth.

"There's your new silk, dear—may you en-
joy it."

His forbidding manner had so entirely disap-
peared that Effie's heart was encouraged to un-
dertake another pet plan.

So, as she demurely folded the money away
in her pretty little crimson Russia pocket-book,
she began, so quietly that Ellis was quite cap-
tured by storm:

"I was wondering if it would not be a good
plan if we shut up the house for August, dear,
and go somewhere. It will do you so much
good, I'm sure, and there will be no expenses
here while we're away. Can't we go to Long
Branch?"

She opened the big battery very suddenly—
almost staggering Tremayne.

"Oh, Effie, no! It would involve a larger
expense, ten times, than it costs home." Then,
seeing that well-known, martyr-like expression
settling on her face, that always drove him to
desperation, he added, hastily: "If you can
manage it, go yourself. I dare say some of
your fashionable friends will chaperone you."

"Oh, may I, may I, really? Indeed I will
manage it! I don't need many new things, I'm
sure. I have enough for the silk, and with a
little more I can easily get what I absolutely
need. Ellis, you are a darling!"

He laughed—not very joyously.

"I am glad you think so. Well, I'm off!"

Two hours later Mrs. Effie Tremayne, dressed
in an unexceptionably elegant walking-cos-
tume started out on her shopping-tour, to meet
at the silk counter in Stewart's Mrs. Godfrey
Coddington, carelessly tossing over rare pieces
of evening silk.

"I am so delighted to have your taste on my
new silks, my dear Mrs. Tremayne. Do tell
me which you prefer, the salmon or the pearl-
blue or this sunnier pink? I intend to have a
couple of them for Long Branch."

Long Branch! Mrs. Tremayne's cheeks
glowed.

"I hope to see you at the shore, Mrs. Cod-
dington, and in either this exquisite maize or
silver pink."

"So you will be there! Do join our party
—only Godfrey and sister Blanche and Nellie
Belleburn and I—for next Thursday week, at the
West End. Have you engaged rooms? What
shall you get now?"

It was certainly very delightful to be talked
to thus, but once home there occurred little
qualms of conscience, as, very, very gradually,
she felt herself drawn into arrangements she
knew were far beyond her reach. And yet she
consented to Mrs. Coddington's kind offer that
Mr. Coddington should secure rooms for her
with his party. She made up her mind that
the elegant stock of clothes that two hours ago
she thought needed only a little renovation and
small addition to make it all that was neces-
sary, would not begin to do at all. And so,
beside the money her husband had given her
being spent for the dozen and one trifling ac-
cessories that a well-dressed woman's toilet de-
mands, there was folded away in a seldom-used
compartment of Mrs. Tremayne's pocket-book
an unrecipited bill for a hundred and ninety-
seven dollars, made out to Mr. Ellis Tre-
mayne.

Effie's blue eyes were dancing and her cheeks
flushed when she was set down with her parcels
from Mrs. Coddington's carriage at her own
door; and she had time to spare before
Ellis came in to the six o'clock dinner to look
over her purchases, that, after all, seemed very
few and small considering that horrid bill in
her pocket-book, that she dreaded to show her
husband for all the flushed gaiety of her man-
ner.

"Ah, is there any need to tell him now?"
she reasoned, while she removed her street

suit, and donned a lovely black tissue. "Not
the slightest use to tell him before I go away.
He'll only make a fuss, and I do hate a fuss.
Besides, after I'm home again, perhaps I can
save it out of the market money."

So she quieted her conscience with the hope-
fully specious promise; and the next day, find-
ing it impossible to get ready by herself in
time to go with Mrs. Coddington's party, was
obliged to employ the services of a high-priced
dressmaker, whose bill for services she tucked
away in her pocket-book also, and thus swell-
ed the indebtedness of her husband fifty dol-
lars more, to be paid when she returned.

Ah, when she returned! If she had only
known, as she kissed her daintily-kidled hand
to her husband, from the deck of the boat, as
he stood watching her off, with a look in his
eyes that was mingled love, sternness, pride, an-
noyance and harrassing worry.

"One of the prettiest women at the shore,
and certainly the best dressed. She must be a
millionaire's wife, at the least. Who did you
say you understood she was?"

Old Mr. Wingfield put up his eye-glass as
Mrs. Tremayne went by, fair to see as a lily,
in her carriage dress of tender cream tint,
with her lace-covered pink-lined parasol mak-
ing faint, rosy shades on her clear blonde face
and brilliant golden hair.

"She is a Mrs. Ellis Tremayne, from New
York—with the Coddingtons, I believe, and
putting up at the West End. A regular beauty,
isn't she?"

Mr. Wingfield put his eye glass slowly
back, staring after the Coddington carriage.
"Mrs. Ellis Tremayne? I suppose her hus-
band is here?"

"Not that I know of. Indeed, I think I
heard young Ral Belleburn say he was unable to
leave his business—a bookkeeper or something, I
believe, for a firm in the city."

Mr. Wingfield arose from his chair with an
odd smile on his face.

"Mrs. Tremayne must either be mistress of
the wonderful economy of making a dollar
travel both ways, or else—"

A boy with a yellow envelope tapped him on
the arm.

"Oh, a telegram; from my son, I presume.
Wait a minute."

He deliberately adjusted his glasses, and then
opened the dispatch.

"Come at once. Everything traced to T."
"JASAR WINGFIELD."

And, as he returned the paper to the en-
velope, he looked up to see Mrs. Tremayne dash-
ing by again, her face radiant with pleasure
and excitement, as Ral Belleburn talked and
laughed with her.

The pretty little house seemed so lonely and
deserted after Effie had gone, and Ellis Tre-
mayne threw himself wearily on the lounge in
her boudoir, his face wearing marks of strange-
ly contorted discouragement and excitement.

For an hour or so he lay there, his eyes closed,
his figure motionless, and then he arose with a
half-groan of mental distress.

"This will never do. I shall g mad if I
stay here with only my thoughts for—"

He had gone over to the little dressing-bu-
roon, carelessly taking up two little pieces of
paper, that Effie had entirely forgotten to hide
—and a pallor, even more marked than his late
deathly paleness, overspread his face as he saw
the two formidable bills.

Then something very like an oath came from
his set teeth.

"My temptation be on her head—my—"

He sprang suddenly to his feet as the door-
bell pealed imperiously, and listened with no
ordinary curiosity as a man's voice demanded
to see Mr. Ellis Tremayne, and heard the ser-
vant usher his company into the drawing-
room.

A fierce, lurid light fairly corruscated in his
eyes, and he smiled horribly as he put his right
hand in his breast pocket as if feeling for some-
thing. Then he went slowly, slowly down
stairs, into the presence of Mr. Wingfield and
an officer of the law.